Of Truſt in God:

OR, A

DISCOURSE

Concerning the DUTY of

Caſting our Care upon God

In all our DIFFICULTIES.

Together with

An EXHORTATION to *Patient Suffering for Righteouſneſs.*

In a SERMON on 1 S. *Pet.* III. 14, 15.

BY

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THE PREFACE.

AMongſt the great variety of excellent Practical Diſcourſes this preſent Age has produced, I have often wondered, that no more has been written concerning the Duty here treated of. Than which, though no ſort of Vertue is more uſefull for all Eſtates and Conditions of Life, and eſpecially for teaching how to bear Afflictions with a truly Chriſtian Patience, and Reſignation to the Divine Will, yet I know none that has ever ſet himſelf to a particular Conſideration of it. The admirable Author of *the Whole Duty of Man*, the Learned Dr. *Hammond*, Dr. *Scott*, and ſome others, have recommended it, as a neceſſary and comfortable Branch of Chriſtianity. But their more general Deſigns allowed them not to enlarge upon it, to the prejudice of thoſe other Duties, they were to inſiſt

upon alſo at the ſame time. And none elſe having undertaken it, (unleſs perhaps within the compaſs of a Sermon) I perſwaded my ſelf, that I could not do God and Religion better ſervice, than by offering what Meditations ſeemed to me moſt proper for inviting to it, nor could propoſe any Expedient, that might tend more to Men's Quiet and eaſie Paſſage through this troubleſome World.

* Pſal. 27. 13. * *I ſhould utterly have fainted*, ſaith the devout Pſalmiſt, *but that I believe verily to ſee the Goodneſs of the Lord in the land of the living.* And even the very † Heathens could rejoice to think that Almighty God was their compaſſionate Protector and Defender, having condeſcended to take upon him the Guardianſhip of Mankind. Nor can any thing be a greater refreſhment to an afflicted Soul, than to remember, that not Fortune, nor Chance, nor Fate, nor the Malice, the Ambition, the Revenge, the Avarice, the Treachery of wicked Men, nor even the Power and Spight and Subtility of the Devil, governs the World, but all our affairs are ordered by an infinitely Wiſe and Good God, who knows our Condition much better than our ſelves do, and loves

† Atque etiam Jovem quum Optimum Maximum dicimus, cumq; eumdem ſalutarem, hoſpitalem, ſtatorem, hoc intelligi volumus, ſalutem hominum in ejus eſſe tutelâ. *Cic. de fin. bon. & mal. l.* 3. *c.* 20.

loves us much better than we love our ſelves, and will be ſure to make a far better choice for us, than we could for our ſelves.

For my own part, I muſt confeſs to my Maker's Glory, that it having been my portion of late years to have met with troubles of different kinds, I have always found a ſerious Reflexion upon his good Providence the beſt ſupport under them; and the more ſenſibly ſo, by how much the more firmly I have fixed my thoughts upon him, and endeavoured to comfort and encourage my ſelf in him.

This put me upon drawing up the following Diſcourſe, and now upon preſenting it to the Chriſtian Reader, in hope that it may not prove wholly uſeleſs to others in the like, or worſe circumſtances; or at leaſt, that its Defects may tempt ſome abler Author to reſume the Argument, and ſupply what is wanting here. And if it ſhall have either of theſe effects, I ſhall not reckon my time or pains to have been miſ-employed.

And becauſe a conſtant and conſcientious Dependance upon God is an excellent Preparative for *Suffering for Righteouſneſs*, whenſoever he in his wiſe Providence ſees fit to call us to it, I have ventured to ſubjoyn a Diſcourſe alſo upon that ſub-

ject; that as the former I hope may be of uſe for enabling, ſo this other may be a means of engaging us, to *take up our Croſs*, and follow our Bleſſed Lord through all the Impediments we may at any time have occaſion to encounter with in doing it, fighting manfully under his banner, deſpiſing all terreſtrial Advantages, in compariſon of the ineſtimable, unconceivable Glories of the other State, and ſtudying to expreſs our hearty Senſe of what our Redeemer has ſo graciouſly done and ſuffered for us, by *conforming our ſelves to his Image*, who was *made perfect through ſufferings*, treading in his ſteps, and reſigning our ſelves entirely to our heavenly Father's Will, patiently, undauntedly, and meekly to bear whatſoever is brought upon us for his ſake.

I confeſs I have all along, in what I have written, proceeded upon Chriſtian Principles, taking it for a ſufficient Proof of a ſuper-intending Providence to order our affairs for us, that the Holy Scriptures bear ſuch undeniable teſtimony to it. Greater Authority cannot be had for any Truth, than the expreſs Word of God declaring it. And this therefore I have reſted upon, as the beſt foundation for whatſoever Doctrines I have laid down, or Arguments I have urged in behalf of them.

Yet

Yet conſidering the ſhamefull degeneracy of our Times, wherein too many, that bear our Saviour's Name, ſtick not however to decry all Divine Revelation, and ſet up for bare Reaſon and the Light of Nature, as their only Guide. I was once * about to have addreſſed my ſelf to theſe in their own way, to ſhew, that beſides the abundant Evidence we have from Scripture, their ſo much admired Reaſon pleads loudly for, nay undoubtedly evinces the Certainty of an over-ruling Providence. But finding this undertaking like to ſwell to a much greater length than I had expected, and fearing leſt it might cauſe too great a breach in the thread of my Diſcourſe, and might be tedious and unſeaſonable to the better ſort of Chriſtians, who are already ſufficiently ſatisfied of this great Truth, and need not to have it thus inculcated, I altered my deſign, and ſent the Sheets to the Preſs, as they now appear, intending only to give ſome ſhort intimation of the Arguments I had ſuppreſſed, in this Preface.

* Chap. 3. Sect. 1.

But I have ſince been perſwaded to perfect what I had thus begun, and to publiſh it in this place; where, coming by it ſelf, it will make no interruption in the body of the Diſcourſe; and beſides,

will leave the Reader the more perfectly at liberty, either to peruſe, or paſs it by, as he ſhall think moſt proper.

Now the Arguments which I deſigned to have urged in this Caſe, and which I here propoſe to the ſerious Conſideration, of all that are not ſufficiently and undoubtedly convinced of the certainty of a ſuper-intending Providence, and the juſt ground they therefore have to reſt upon it, are ſuch as ariſe from theſe five following Heads.

I. The Nature of Almighty God, and the Perfection of his Divine Attributes.
II. The Creation of the World.
III. The Continuance of things in the ſtate we ſee them in.
IV. The excellent Order and Harmony of the ſeveral Parts of the World.
V. And Laſtly, The many extraordinary Effects that have been obſerved at any time, beyond, nay contrary to the wonted Power and Laws of Nature.

I. The firſt (which alone, if rightly attended to, were an abundant proof of the matter in queſtion) is taken from the Nature

Nature of Almighty God, and the Perfection of his Divine Attributes; whence he not only is able to manage and order all things, but is likewiſe inclined to conſult the welfare of all. For none who believes a God, but muſt believe him to be abſolutely Perfect; and amongſt other his Divine Excellencies, muſt believe him to be infinitely Wiſe, Powerfull, and Good. And whoſoever owns this, muſt farther own, * that theſe Attributes neceſſarily imply an Exerciſe of them, for the benefit of any that ſtand in need of it. For infinite Wiſdom will be ſure to find out the ſtreights and troubles of the diſtreſſed; infinite Power will eaſily furniſh out means for their relief; and infinite Goodneſs will readily excite to the uſe of all theſe means. So that where all theſe Perfections concur, (as they moſt manifeſtly do in Almighty God,) it muſt argue great weakneſs in any to doubt whether they will exert themſelves whenſoever there appears a proper occaſion for it. And † *Epiſcopius* therefore had good reaſon to cenſure ſuch, *as hardly in their ſenſes*, who cannot

* Quid igitur in Deo poteſt eſſe beatitudo, ſi ſemper quietus, & immobilis torpet? Si precantibus ſurdus, ſi colentibus cæcus? Quid tam dignum, tam propriũm Deo, quam Providentia? *Lactant. de irâ Dei, c.* 4. Si eſt Deus, utique Providens eſt ut Deus, *ibid. c.* 9.

† Exiſtimo tamen eam [n. Providentiam] ita conſentaneam eſſe, naturæ Dei, ejuſque divinis Proprietatibus,----ut qui eam Deo competere dubitare audet, vix inter ſanos, & mentis ſuæ compotes, cenſeri debeat. *Inſtit. Theol. l.* 4. *ſect.* 4. *c.* 4.

not but acknowledge a God thus infinitely perfect, and yet are unwilling to own a Providence; and * *Lactantius*, to charge it home upon *Epicurus*, that by denying a Providence, he in effect denied the Being of God too, who could not rationally be supposed to exist without it. A Deity without a Providence, is an egregious contradiction. And it were incomparably easier to imagine that the Sun should be without light, or Fire without heat, than that an infinitely gracious and good God should be without doing good. In a word, As certainly as God is, he delights in Mercy and Beneficence; and as certainly as he doth this, there is and must be a Providence concerning it self for the welfare of those that depend upon him.

* Cum igitur Providentiam sustulit, etiam Deum negavit esse. *De irâ Dei*, c. 9.

II. However, for the farther proof hereof, I proceed to argue from the Creation of the World. For let a Man consider, that the World cannot possibly have been from Eternity; as, besides the Relation *Moses* gives of its Original, is rationally enough collected from the accounts we have of the beginnings of Arts and Learning; from the want of any, either History or Tradition, ancienter than the supposed time of the Creation; from the nature of Time and Motion, each of which

which implying in it a Succeſſion, muſt unavoidably imply alſo that it had a beginning; from the propagation of Mankind, and other living Creatures; all which muſt neceſſarily have had ſome firſt Head or Parent, from whom they proceeded, though at never ſo great a diſtance; and laſtly, from the * general Tradition of Mankind, acknowledging it to have began ſometime, though they knew not when. Let it farther be obſerved, that this ſtately Fabrick could never poſſibly be erected by ſuch a wild fortuitous concourſe of Atoms, as was never known to have built † *a Temple*, *a City*, *a Houſe*, or ſo much as *a Porch* to it. Let us farther attend to ‖ the wonderfull Frame and Contexture of the ſeveral parts of the World, beſpeaking it to be the work of a moſt Wiſe Intelligent Being; and that therefore * none but Almighty God can have been the Maker of it. Let it

* Γινόμενον μὲν ἂν ἀΐδιον εἶναι φασιν. *Ariſtot. de cœlo, l.* 1. *c.* 10. *vid. etiam, l.* 3. *c.* 1. Omnibus ad hoc demum conſentientibus, &c. *Iren. l.* 2. *c.* 9. Vetus eſt opinio, atque cogitationes omnium hominum penitus inſedit, Deum eſſe originis & haberi authorem. *Apul. de Mundo.*

† Quod ſi mundum efficere poteſt concurſus atomorum, cur porticum, cur templum, cur domum, cur urbem non poteſt? Quæ ſunt minus operoſa, & multo quidem faciliora. *Cic. de nat. Deor. l.* 2. *c.* 37.

‖ Tanta res, tam ornata, tam magna, neque fieri, neque diſponi & ordinari, ſine aliquo prudentiſſimo authore potuit; & ea ipſa ratio, quâ conſtare ac regi omnia ſentiuntur, ſolertiſſimæ mentis artificem confitetur. *Lactant. Inſt. l.* 7. *c.* 7.

* Ipſa enim conditio oſtendit eum, qui condidit eam, &c. *Iren. l.* 2. *c.* 9.

be

be remembred, that the * World thus evidently and undeniably appears to have been at first created by God; and † who would not be ashamed to suspect that the same infinite Bounty which perswaded him to create it at first, will not still engage him to look after it, now it has a Being? It is at least as easy to preserve, and govern all things now they are made, as it was to make them out of nothing. And it is very unreasonable to fansie that the same immense Goodness, which was the occasion of the one, should not as well be an occasion of the other. For that it will, is so natural an Inference, that || *Protagoras*, *Democritus*, *Anaxagoras*, and the rest of those amongst the Philosophers, who denied a Providence, found it necessary to deny the Creation too.

* Ἔιτις ἐρεῖ Θεός εἰμι παρέξ ἑνὸς, αὐτὸς ὀφείλει. Κόσμον ἴσον τούτῳ στήσας εἰπεῖν ἐμὸς οὗτος.
Fragm. Pythag.

† Quis enim non sentiat hunc mundum, tam mirabili ratione perfectum, aliquâ providentiâ gubernari? *Lactant. Inst. l.* 3. *c.* 20. *vid. etiam l.* 2. *c.* 8. Quid enim potest esse tam apertum, tamque perspicuum, cum oculos in cœlum sustuleris, & quæ sunt infra circaque lustraveris, quàm esse aliquod numen præstantissimæ mentis, quo omnis natura inspiretur? &c. *Min. Fel.*

|| Lactant. Inst. l. 1. c. 2.

* *No wise Man*, as a late excellent Divine of our own Church reasons, *ever bestowed his pains, and employed his care, and laid out his treasure to make a house, and then presently left that house, for the Owls and the Batts, for the Satyr and the Dragon to dwell in; much less can it be supposed, that God made the World, and then*

* Dr. *Outram* Serm. 1. on S. *Matth.* 10 29.

then preſently deſerted it, after it was made, leaving thoſe things to be governed by Chance, which he had made by Wiſdom. But the learned *Grotius* proceeds further, arguing for a Providence, not only from the Actions of Men endued with Reaſon, but of the Birds and Beaſts which have it not, and yet * *from a certain inſtinct of Nature are wont to have a care of the things, which have been produced by them.* Whence he obſerves the great vanity of conceiting God, to have created ſo noble and well-compoſed a World, and then to concern himſelf no farther about it. This were to leave not Mankind only, but all things elſe expoſed to innumerable miſchiefs and diſorders, and certain confuſion and deſtruction, and hence would repreſent Almighty God, as acting with leſs conſiſtence; I ſay not then Mankind, but then the meaneſt of his Creatures, that are capable of acting at all. Wherefore the groſs abſurdity of this ſuppoſal is a ſufficient evidence of its falſity, and conſequently is a very good Argument to evince the certainty of a ſuper-intending Providence.

* De verit. rel. Chriſt. l. 1. c. 16.

III. As is alſo the Continuance of things in the ſtate and order we ſee them in.

in. * A Man cannot build a House, but it will be thenceforward decaying; and if neglected, it soon becomes ruinous and useless; and though no unexpected Accident happen to destroy it, in a little time it perishes of it self, except due care be taken to repair it. Have a Ship into the Ocean, and leave it there without any to direct or steer it, and what else can be looked for, than that it be lost, especially if it be in a place of danger, and the season prove tempestuous. Our own Bodies in like manner (frail and feeble as we are) if not constantly supplied with food for their nourishment, and sometimes with Physick, for their relief against the frequent Distempers to which they are liable, quickly moulder into dust. And after all our care for their Preservation, it is not long we can hope to prop them up, before, according to the course of Nature, we shall be gathered to our Fathers. Whereto if the many unforeseen Mischiefs be added, to which our selves and all things else are every day obnoxious, there is no appearance of security in whatsoever

* Nihil est quod possit sine ullo moderatore consistere. Sic domus ab habitatore deserta dilabitur. Navis sine gubernatore abit pessum. Et corpus relictum ab animâ defluit. Nedum putemus tantam illam molem, aut construi sine artifice, aut stare sine rectore, tamdiu potuisse. *Lact. Instit. l.* 3. *c.* 20. Ὥσπερ τὸ γεγονὸς οὐκ ἂν ἐγένετο μὴ ἐκείνου προστάξαντος, Γενηθήτω· οὕτως οὐδ' ἂν διέμεινε, μὴ ἐκείνου θεμένου τὸ πρόσταγμα. Just. M. Arist. dogm. evers. Πᾶν τὸ γινόμενον φθείρεται. Salust. Phil. de Diis & mundo, c. 7.

ver condition. Whence then are we all preserved in being, but from the good * Providence of God, continually watching over us for our support? Or † what else could possibly keep us as we are, but that Almighty Hand of his, from whence we at first proceeded?

* Omnia quæ naturaliter, & propterea rectè feruntur, Providentiæ custodiâ gubernantur. *Apul. de Habit. Doct. Plat. l* 1.

† Ἱκαναὶ πίστεις γεγόνασί τινες τοῦ προνοεῖν τὸ θεῖον ἀνθρώπων, καὶ μάλιστα τοῦ ἱκετικοῦ γένους. Phil. Jud. de legat. ad Caium.

And what clearer proof therefore would any one desire of a Divine Providence, than that this being the case, the face of things should however after so many thousand years remain much the same that was at first? that the same Heavens, the same Earth, the same Species of Animals, &c. that were created at the beginning, should thus continue from generation to generation? He that can conceive this to be the effect of any thing else but an infinitely wise and uncontroulable Power, need not fear to set up for the defence of any the grossest paradox in the World.

IV. The excellent Harmony of the several parts of the World, that they are not only preserved in being, || but act by constant Laws and Methods, plainly declares an invisible Hand of Providence over-

|| — Æquabilitatem motus, conversionem cœli, solis, lunæ, siderumque omnium distinctionem,

ruling

utilitatem, pulchritudinem, ordinem; quarum rerum aſpectus ipſe ſatis indicaret non eſſe fortuita. *Cic. de nat. Deor. l.* 2. *c.* 5. Nec enim tanta rerum magnitudo, tanta diſpoſitio, tanta in ſervandis ordinibus, temporibuſque conſtantia, aut olim potuit ſine provido artifice oriri, aut conſtare tot ſæculis ſine incola poteuti, aut in perpetuum gubernari ſine perito rectore, quod ratio ipſa declarat. *Lact. de irâ Dei, c.* 10.

At cur diſpoſitis vicibus conſurgere ſigna,
Et velut imperio præſcriptos reddere curſus
Cernimus, &c. *Manil. Aſtron. l.* 1.

Πόθεν γὰρ ἡ τάξις τῷ κόσμῳ, εἰπερ μηδὲν ἦν τὸ τάττον, &c. Saluſt. phil. de Diis & Mundo, c. 9. ἀφ' ἑκάστου τοῦ κόσμου γιγνομένου, ῥᾴδιόν ἐστιν ἐγκωμιάζειν τὴν πρόνοιαν, &c. Arr. Epictet. l. 1. c. 6.

ruling them. If infinite Wiſdom were to direct the diſſerent ſeaſons of the year, or appoint the courſe of the Planets, or limit the returns of day and night, how could they be expected to be otherwiſe than they are now, all proceeding in due order, and ſerving their proper end, the glory of God, and the benefit of Mankind?

If infinite Power were to diſplay it ſelf in the Government of the World, what other effects of it could be hoped for, than that it ſhould preſcribe the Sea its proper limits, leſt it ſhould otherwiſe overwhelm the Earth; ſhould *give us rain from heaven, and fruitfull ſeaſons, filling our hearts with food and gladneſs*; ſhould allow Man the dominion over the beaſts of the Earth, that they prevail not againſt him, nor deſtroy him; ſhould cauſe

cauſe thoſe amazing productions which are conſtantly ſeen in Trees, and Plants, and Minerals; ſhould keep all the Elements *in æquilibrio*, that neither of them may prevail over the other; ſhould diſpoſe all ſecond Cauſes to the beſt advantage; and, in fine, ſhould oblige them all to operate after the ſame manner that we daily ſee they do? And if infinite Goodneſs were to unite with both theſe, what more could be deſired from ſuch a bleſſed Conjunction, than that all due Care be taken of particular Perſons, and of whole Societies, both to preſerve them in being, and to ſupply them with all needfull bleſſings? And why then, whilſt theſe effects appear, ſhould we any more doubt, as * *Irenæus* argues, *of their true Cauſe, than they who lived in the remoter Territories of the* Roman *Empire doubted, whether there were an Emperour at* Rome, *when they were governed by him, though by reaſon of their diſtance from his Imperial City, they had never ſeen him?*

* Nunquid hi qui ſub Romanorum imperio ſunt, quamvis nunquam viderint Imperatorem, ſed valdè & per mare & per terram ſeparati ab eo, cognoſcent propter Dominum, eum qui maximam Poteſtatem habet Principatus? &c. *Iren. l.* 2. *c.* 5.

That we have variety of weather ſuitable to our neceſſities, that the Earth produces plenty of uſefull fruits, ſtore of beautifull and fragrant Flowers, Graſs, and

and Wood, and Minerals of divers ſorts, that it furniſhes us with food to live upon, with cloaths to wear, with materials for Houſes to dwell in, with medicinal Herbs and Waters, and with ornamental Rarities; that the Sea ſerves for maintaining Commerce through the ſeveral parts of the Globe; that this alſo affords food and other conſiderable advantages; that we have a healthfull Air to breathe in, and whoſe tranſparency conveighs to us a due proportion both of heat and light; that the many different ſpecies of Animals are propagated with the ſame Shape, the ſame natural Inſtincts, the ſame ways of ſeeking their own Proviſion, and the ſame Care of their Young; that Mankind are *fearfully and wonderfully made*, have an excellent contexture of parts, have ſo much likeneſs, and yet together with it ſo much * difference in their Countenances; that they and other Creatures grow to a certain Stature, there continue, and then at length decay, and die, and ſo make room for others to ſucceed them; that our food digeſts and becomes our nouriſhment; and that in all reſpects we are thus admirably accommodated with what our condition calls for,

* Eadem figura omnibus, ſed quædam unicuiq; lineamenta deflexa: ſic & ſimiles univerſi videmur, & inter ſe ſinguli diſſimiles inveniamur. *Min. Fel.*

Non

* *Non caſus opus eſt, magni ſed Numinis ordo,* * Manil. Aſtron. l. 1.

this cannot be the work of chance, but of a wiſe and good God, who is pleaſed moſt graciouſly to manifeſt his kindneſs through the Univerſe. It is not poſſible that a fortuitous jumbling of uncertain Cauſes ſhould ever produce ſuch a train of ſingular Events, as carry in them the plain footſteps of a divine Diſpoſal. And he muſt be blind, or worſe, that having this daily experience of the good hand of God over himſelf and his fellow-creatures, will not yet be perſwaded to own his Providence.

There is none, ſays † *Lactantius,* ſo rude, *or ſo brutiſh, but that when he lifts up his Eyes to Heaven, though he know not the God, by whoſe influence all that we ſee is governed, he will however underſtand that there is a God, from the large extent of the things he beholds, and their motion, diſpoſition, continuance, uſefulneſs, beauty, and temperature.* And ‖ *Tully* will hardly allow him the Name and Qualifications

† Inſtit. Div. l. 1. c. 2.

‖ Quem vero aſtrorum ordines, quem dierum noctiumque viciſſitudines, quem menſium temperatio, quemque ea quæ gignuntur nobis ad fruendum, non gratum eſſe cogunt, hunc hominem omnino numerare neque decet. *De legibus* l. 2. c. 7. Quis enim hunc hominem dixerit, qui cum tam certos cœli motus, tam ratos aſtrorum ordines, tamque omnia inter ſe connexa & apta viderit, neget in his ullam meſſe rationem, eaque caſu fieri dicat? *De nat. Deor.* l. 2. c. 37.

of a Man, that can obſerve the certain motions of the Heavens, the fixed courſes of the Stars, and the aptitude and mutual connexion of all things, and not be forced to confeſs, that not Chance, but Reaſon is the cauſe of theſe. And elſewhere * he affirms the beauty of the World, and the order of the heavenly things to be an undeniable proof of an excellent and eternal Nature, and that is to be honoured and admired by Mankind. And yet the heavenly bodies are not ſingular in their teſtimony; for there is not a † Spire of Graſs here below, not an Herb in the Field, much leſs a ſtately Tree in the Wood, or a delicious Flower in the Garden, but are witneſſes to this great Truth.

Wherefore if upon ſight of a * Ship under ſail, holding on her courſe, and making readily towards the ſhore, it is preſently concluded that this veſſel comes not of it ſelf, but is ſteered by its Mariners, howſoever none of them as yet appear above deck, or † if obſerving a Houſe, a School, or a Court, where all things look well, and with

* Eſſe præſtantem aliquam æternamque naturam, & eam ſuſpiciendam admirandamque hominum generi, pulchritudo mundi, ordoque rerum cœleſtium cogit confiteri. *De divinat. l.* 2.

† Præſentemque refert quælibet herba Deum.

* Ὃν τρόπον γὰρ καὶ πλοῖον θεασάμενός τις ἐν θαλάσσῃ κατηρτισμένον, καὶ τρέχον, καὶ κατερχόμενον εἰς λιμένα, δῆλον ὅτι ἡγήσεται εἶναι ἐν αὐτῷ κυβερνήτην τὸν κυβερνῶντα αὐτὸ, οὕτω δεῖ νοεῖν τὸν θεὸν κυβερνήτην τῶν ὅλων, &c. Theoph. Antioch. ad Autol. l. 1.

† Siquis in domum aliquam, aut in gymnaſium, aut in forum vene-

with a due decorum, we eaſily perſwade our ſelves that this comes not to paſs by chance, but by the care of ſome prudent Maſter or Governour, much rather ſhould we attend to the hand of God in the management of the World, when we obſerve the manifold inſtances of his Providence that each day preſents us with. Not to believe in him upon this undeniable evidence, is a height of perverſeneſs, that may juſtly prevail with him to withdraw his Protection from us, and teach us by ſad experience, what it is to want it.

rit; cum videat omnium rerum rationem, modum, diſciplinam, non poſſit ea ſine causâ fieri judicare, ſed eſſe aliquem intelligat, qui præſit, & cui pareatur; multo magis—ſtatuat neceſſe eſt, ab aliquâ mente tantos naturæ motus gubernari. *Cic. de nat. Deor. l.* 2. *c.* 5.

* *I had rather believe all the Fables in the Legend and the Talmud*, ſays a noble Author, *than that this univerſal Frame is without a Mind*; and adds, that *therefore God never wrought a Miracle to convince Atheiſm, becauſe his ordinary Works convince it.* And yet theſe are not the only proof we have of a Powerfull Supreme Being that orders all our affairs for us. For if we proceed to

* Lord *Bacon.* Eſſ. 16.

V. The many Extraordinary Interpoſals that have been taken notice of in the World, theſe alſo loudly teſtifie that Almighty God intereſts himſelf in the con-

cerns of his Creatures, directing and disposing all things according to his own good pleasure, and the wise ends of his Government. Of this kind are all the * Predictions of future Events, long before they came to pass, or could possibly be foreseen without the help of some supernatural Revelation; and all the Miracles that have from time to time been wrought, contrary to the wonted methods and Laws of Nature; which, whether any of them were done purposely to confute Atheism, or not, are yet a most palpable confutation of it. Each of these demonstrate all things to act in subordination to God's Will, because otherwise he could neither overrule them, contrary to their usual course, nor could foretell what should happen, long after without his concurrence. And therefore if it can be made appear that there has been variety of Prophecies which have been in due time, and perhaps after many Ages, accomplished exactly as had been foretold, and of Miracles that have been wrought to the certain knowledge and astonishment of the beholders, who could not but own the hand of God to be in them; I presume nothing more can be wanting to put it beyond all pretence of

* Αἱ τε ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ μαντεῖαι, καὶ θεραπεῖαι σωμάτων γιγνόμεναι, τῆς ἀγαθῆς προνοίας εἰσι. Salust. Phil. de Diis & Mundo, c. 9.

of doubt, that God not only is, but that he continually concerns himſelf in the Government of the World.

And for the proof hereof, I deſire only this one reaſonable Poſtulate to be granted me; which yet can with no ſhew of juſtice be denied; namely, That the holy Scriptures of the Old and New Teſtament, and the Writings of the Chriſtians in the firſt Ages of the Church, may but be owned as credible Hiſtories, and the matters of fact related in them as worthy our belief as thoſe which are recorded by other Hiſtorians. This is an equal, and a very modeſt demand, conſidering the far greater reſpect that is due to the ſacred Writings, than any other Records whatſoever can poſſibly pretend to. For (beſides their divine Authority, which I am not now to inſiſt upon) they have ſeveral other very conſiderable advantages for their Credibility, above any other Hiſtory that ever was in the World. Chriſtianity has no greater Enemies than the Jews have been and ſtill are, and yet they have all along been, and at this day continue as zealous as ever for the Books of the Old Teſtament. They have conſtantly owned them for Authentick, their Hiſtorian *Joſephus* bears witneſs to them, and they yet adhere to them as undoubt-

edly true. And as for the greateſt part of the New Teſtament, and indeed all that I have need to recurr to in the caſe before us, there not only was never any doubt amongſt the regular and orthodox Chriſtians concerning its being genuine, but it was never queſtioned by *Celſus*, or *Julian*, or any of its moſt avowed Adverſaries, who we are ſure would never have ſpared the Chriſtians, if they could have found any pretence for an objection in this reſpect. And beſides, that the Authors of theſe holy Writings were Men of untainted reputation, upon whom no inſtance of impoſture could be fixed, they were moreover ſo different for quality, ſome of them Kings and great Men, ſome of them mean and illiterate, no better than Shepherds, or Fiſhers, or Publicans, ſome of a middle condition between both, ſo many for number, and who wrote in ſuch diſtant times, that they could never poſſibly be thought to have all combined together, to deceive the World, nor like to have eſcaped a diſcovery, if they could have attempted it.

The Authours and Publiſhers of the New Teſtament were ſuch who had nothing to expect in this World, but tribulations, and afflictions, and death, the portion

tion that our Saviour had foretold would be allotted to his Diſciples; and in the World to come they could have no good to hope for, if they had only conſpired to delude Mankind, in tranſmitting to all generations what they knew to be falſe. And hence they could have no other Deſign to ſerve in what they publiſhed, but that of propagating the Truth.

And ſince the writing and divulging of the Scriptures, they have been tranſlated into abundantly more Languages, have had incomparably more Copies and Impreſſions, and been the ſubject of vaſtly more Commentaries, Annotations, Paraphraſes, and given occaſion for multitudes more of Diſquiſitions and Diſcourſes, and upon all theſe accounts were apparently far leſs liable to be corrupted, than any other Authours whatſoever. They have had the teſtimony of a whole cloud of Chriſtian Martyrs, who ſtuck not readily to reſign their lives, in purſuance of the Truth contained therein. And notwithſtanding all the oppoſition that has been made againſt them, they have prevailed to that degree, as plainly to ſhew a divine Bleſſing going along with them, to give them ſucceſs in ſpight of all the malice of *Jews* or *Gentiles*, or the Devil himſelf,

ſelf, and his utmoſt contrivances for their ſuppreſſion. So that after all this he muſt be monſtrouſly unreaſonable, that will not yet be induced to place them in the rank of the moſt credible Hiſtorians, or indeed that ſees not of what unſpeakably greater Authority they are, than all other the moſt celebrated Hiſtories. The leaſt that can poſſibly be inferred from theſe Premiſes is, that either Men muſt utterly renounce all Hiſtory, and all pretence to the knowledge of what is paſt before their own days, or they muſt be brought to confeſs the Scriptures a juſt foundation for their belief of the Matters related in them. And this being once granted, there can be no difficulty in the proof of multitudes both of Propheſies and of Miracles, to evince the certainty of an over-ruling Providence.

1. Propheeies. And here, if I ſhould begin with that of *Noah*, concerning the Deluge of Waters that was to be *brought upon the World of the ungodly*, it would eaſily be ſhewn that he was certainly a true Prophet, though he had *Caſſandra*'s fate, not to be attended to by an incredulous generation, till their own ſad experience too late convinced them of the reality of his Predictions. He not only in-

informed them of their approaching deſtruction, as may juſtly be collected from his Hiſtory in the ſixth and ſeventh Chapters of *Geneſis*, and St. *Peter*'s affirmation, 1 Ep. 3. 20. that *God waited in the days of Noah, while the Ark was preparing*, which it is not conceivable he would do without giving notice of it to the people, whoſe repentance he waited for; *Noah* I ſay, not only informed the old World of their approaching deſtruction, but gave them moreover a daily evidence of his own belief and expectation of what he warned them to provide againſt, by building a capacious Ark, wherein to preſerve himſelf, and his houſhold, and ſome of all living creatures, when the reſt ſhould be waſhed away with the Flood, that was ſhortly to come upon them. Nor was he diſappointed; * for at the end of *an hundred* * Gen. 6. *and twenty years*, the time prefixed for the execution of this intended vengeance, the waters came upon them, and deſtroyed them all, except thoſe *few Souls* who were with him in the Ark. Than which, one would not deſire a clearer inſtance of a divine Preſcience, and an uncontroulable Power, that can when it pleaſes, *open the windows of heaven, and break up the fountains of the great deep*, or make whatſoever like alterations in the courſe of Nature,

ture, that is of an over-ruling Providence.

If I ſhould mention in the next place, the notice that was given to the Patriarch *Abraham*, when as yet he had no child, and had little hopes of any, that he ſhould however * *be bleſſed, and his Name made great*, which is † afterward explained to import, (not to touch here upon what related to our bleſſed Saviour) that his ſeed ſhould be exceeding numerous, *as the duſt of the earth, and the ſtars of heaven*, which cannot be reckoned up, and that all the land he could ſee, whether *northward*, or *ſouthward*, or *eaſtward*, or *weſtward*, ſhould be given them to inherit; and ‖ again, that he ſhould be *the Father of many Nations, and Kings ſhould come out of him; and to him, and his ſeed after him, ſhould be given all the land* wherein he ſojourned, the land of *Canaan, for an everlaſting poſſeſſion*; but withall, that they ſhould not enter upon the inheritance of this promiſed land, * till *the fourth generation, when the iniquity of the Amorites would be full*, and would by this means occaſion their utter extirpation; this Prediction alſo muſt be granted to have been accordingly fulfilled, when beſides the *Edomites* and *Moabites* deſcended from *Iſmael*, the Poſterity of *Iſaac* was encreaſed

* Gen. 12. 2.
† C. 13, 14, 15, 16. & c. 15. 5.
‖ C. 17. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.
* C. 15. 13.

ſed into a great People, and being above 400 years after this Promiſe, conducted by *Joſhua* into *Canaan*, and ſettled there, became in time two potent and flouriſhing Kingdoms, and were bleſſed and highly favoured by God above all the nations of the Earth, and might have continued ſo had they not by their multiplied tranſgreſſions provoked God to drive them out of the good land that he had given them, and withdraw his Preſence from them.

Whereto if I ſhould farther add that Meſſage of the Prophet *Jado*, as * *Joſephus* calls him, *Sameas* as † *Tertullian*, *Adonias* as the ‖ Apoſtolical Conſtitutions, the Prophet who was ſent from *Judah* to *Bethel*, and there * *cried againſt the Altar in the word of the Lord, and ſaid, Oh Altar, Altar, thus ſaith the Lord, Behold, a child ſhall be born to the houſe of David, Joſiah by name, and upon thee ſhall he offer the Prieſts of the high-places, that burn incenſe upon thee, and men's bones ſhall be burnt upon thee*; what could have been more expreſsly fulfilled than this was about three hundred and fifty years after? The † King of *Judah* being at that time named *Joſiah*, and the Altar in *Bethel*, and the high-places being broken down by his order, and their Prieſts ſlain, and men's bones burnt upon them, as had

* Antiq l.8.c.3.
† De jejun.c.16.
‖ L. 4. c. 16.
* 1 Kings 13.2.
† 2 Kings 23. 15, 20.

had ſo long before been propheſied of him.

To theſe few inſtances already mentioned, might be added *Joſhua*'s Denunciation againſt whomſoever that ſhould ever undertake the re-building of *Jericho*, n. that * he ſhould *lay the foundation thereof in his firſt-born, and in his youngeſt ſon he ſhould ſet up the gates of it*; that is, that the beginning of his attempt, the laying his foundation, ſhould coſt him his Heir, and that e're he came to finiſh it, and to *ſet up the gates*, he ſhould have loſt the reſt of his children; fulfilled in *Hiel the Bethelite*, who † *laid the foundation thereof in Abiram his firſt-born, and ſet up the gates thereof in his youngeſt ſon Segub, according to the word of the Lord, which he ſpake by Joſhua the ſon of Nun*; Together with *Elijah*'s Prophecy of a ‖ great drought in the days of *Ahab*, wherein himſelf was fed by * Ravens, and afterwards † yet more miraculouſly; His threatening to this wicked King, that ‖ *in the place where dogs licked the blood of Naiboth, they ſhould lick his alſo*; and of *Jezebel*, * that the *dogs ſhould eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel*; And *Eliſha*'s Prophecy of a ſuddain incredible † Plenty, in a time of great Diſtreſs and Famine, which was however brought about in a very extraordinary

* Ch. 6. 26.

† 1 King. 16. 34.

‖ 1 King. 17. 1.

* V. 6.

† V. 16.

‖ C. 21. 19.

* V. 23.

† 2 King. 7. 1.

and

and ſurprizing manner; And *Jeremiah*'s declaration in the Name of the Lord, that * *after ſeventy years the King of Babylon and his Nation ſhould be puniſhed for their iniquity*; which *Iſaiah* alſo intimates was to be done by † *Cyrus*, whom God long before calls his *Shepherd*, becauſe he foreſaw that he would be a Shepherd to the *Jews*, in commanding the reparation of their Metropolis and Temple, *ſaying*, as the Prophet's expreſſion is, *to Jeruſalem, thou ſhalt be built, and to the Temple, thy foundation ſhall be laid*, as he did in the firſt year of his reign, according to the hiſtory of ‖ *Ezra*.

* Jer. 25. 12.

† Iſa. 44. 8.

‖ Ez. 1. 1, 2, 3, 4.

But theſe I content my ſelf to have juſt mentioned, as alſo I purpoſely omit many others, deſigning to inſtance but in one Prediction more, in this place, but which is of much greater Conſequence, and the accompliſhment whereof is more eſpecially remarkable, and the effects of it more viſible at this day.

And that is the Notice which had * *at ſundry times and in divers manners*, been given beforehand of our Bleſſed Saviour's Incarnation, and Sufferings, and the wonderfull, ſtupendous Deliverance he was to work out for his People. Which, accord-

* Λεκτέον οὖν πρῶτον, ὅτι πολλοὶ προφῆται παντοδαπῶς προεῖπον τὰ περὶ Χριστοῦ, οἱ μὲν δι' αἰνιγμάτων, οἱ δὲ δι' ἀλληγορίας, ἢ ἄλλῳ τρόπῳ, τινὲς καὶ αὐτολεξεί. Orig. c. Celſ. l. 1. p. 39.

ing

ing to all the Jewiſh calculations, ſo evidently pointed at the time of his appearance, that * *Grotius* tells us of one *Nehumiah* a Jew, who lived about half an Age before it, and publickly declared that the coming of the *Meſſiah* could not be deferred above fifty years longer. Nor was this any ſingular conjecture of his own, but agreeable to the general opinion of that People, who ordinarily concluded it could not be long before the promiſed Deliverer ſhould ſhew himſelf. Hence at the time of our Saviour's Incarnation we find him ſpoken of by the name of † *the Prophet*, of *him that was to come*; and again, of *the Prophet that was to come*. When *John the Baptiſt* his fore-runner appeared, we find all Men ‖ *muſing in their hearts, whether he were the Chriſt, or not*. Thus we are told of good devout *Simeon*, that *he* * *waited for the conſolation of Iſrael*, (that is, for the coming of the *Meſſias*, † the expected Comforter,) promiſing himſelf to ſee it in his days; and ‖ he heartily rejoiced at the ſight of it. And one

* *De veritat. rel. Chriſt. l.* 5. 14. Nehumiæ illius Magiſtri Hebræi— Mentio fit, in Thalmudicis. Ni fallor eſt in titulo de Synedrio. Oſtendit iſtum mihi locum olim Hagæ Stoctoxus. Puto ejus fieri mentionem & in Abenada ad Danielem. *Cl. Sarrav. Epiſt. p.* 52.

† Quod magnum aliquem prophetam eo ipſo tempore expectarent. Illum nunc ὁ προφήτην appellant cum articulo, nunc ὁ ἐρχόμενον, nunc προφήτην ὁ ἐρχόμενον. Dodw. c. Grot. de jure laicorum Sacerdotali, p. 183.

‖ *S.* Luke 3. 15.

* *S.* Luke 2. 25.

† Dr. *Lightfoot's* Harm. of the Evang. Sect. 6.

‖ *S.* Luke 2. 28, *&c.*

one * *Anna* a Propheteſs, a pious and aged Widow, who *departed not from the Temple, but ſerved God with faſting, and prayers, night and day, ſpake of him to all that looked for redemption in Jeruſalem.* And even the Woman of *Samaria* could tell our Saviour, † *I know that the Meſſiah is coming, who is called Chriſt.* Upon this account it was that the *Jews* ‖ *ſent Prieſts and Levites from Jeruſalem to John the Baptiſt,* to enquire of him, *Who he was?* That is to ſay, whether he were the *Meſſiah* they then looked for or not? As I take to be very plain from the following words, * *And he confeſſed and denied not, but confeſſed I am not the Chriſt.* And that the prevalency of this ſame perſwaſion gave occaſion to the *Herodians* to look upon *Herod* as the Chriſt, is intimated by † *Tertullian*, and more expreſsly aſſerted by ‖ *Epiphanius.*

As others alſo took hold of it to impoſe upon the credulity of that Nation, by pretending ſeverally to be the Saviour they expected to come about that time; Of whom *Gamaliel* names two, * *Theudas*, and *Judas of Galilee*, who both periſhed in their attempt; as † the Jewiſh Hiſtorian alſo acquaints us. Who tells likewiſe ‖ of certain Magicians and Impoſtours about the ſame time, that led the people

* V. 37, 38.

† S. Joh. 4. 25.

‖ S. Joh. 1. 19.

* V. 20.

† —Herodianos, qui Chriſtum Herodem dixerunt. *De præſcr. adv. hæret.* c. 45.

‖ Adv. Hæreſ. l. 1. hær. 20.

* Act. 5. 36, 37.

† Joſ. Antiq. l. 20. c. 2, 3.

‖ L. 20. c. 6.

people out into the Wilderneſs, upon pretence of ſhewing them great ſigns and wonders wrought by the finger of God; but who being ſeized by *Felix* the Governour's order, were made to ſuffer for their preſumption. As alſo he makes mention of another * who had deceived the people with promiſes of Safety, and Deliverance from all their evils, ſo they would but attend him into the Wilderneſs, and hereby brought deſtruction upon himſelf and his deluded followers. As † *Barchocabh*, and others did afterwards. Which it is very reaſonable to ſuppoſe they would not all have done, but that they were encouraged to it, by the diſpoſition they found in the people at that time, to hearken to every one that ſet up for the *Meſſiah*, whom they were eagerly waiting for. And the beſt account therefore of theſe ſeveral pretences was, that which the fore-cited *Joſephus* gives of their War with the *Romans*, that they were tempted to it by the information their Sacred Writings gave them || of *one to be born amongſt them at that time, who ſhould be Ruler of the whole habitable World.*

* L. 20. c. 7.

† Buxt. Synag. Jud. c. 50.

|| Ὡς κατὰ τὸν καιρὸν ἐκεῖνον, ὑπὸ τῆς χώρας τὶς αὐτῶν ἄρξει τῆς οἰκουμένης. De bello Jud. l. 6. c. 31.

And for the further confirmation of this opinion, the learned *Buxtorf* recites a Tradition amongſt them, that erred not

not much in this point, * dividing the Space of this World's duration into three parts, each consisting of two thousand years, the one before the Law, the next under it, and the other in the days of the *Messiah*. Which plainly discovers, that from their several Prophecies relating to the coming of the *Messiah*, the propereſt time they could fix upon for it, was about the four thousandth year of the World, the very year in which Archbishop † *Usher* places our Saviour's Birth.

* Prisci Judæi ante Christi nativitatem, non procul a termino aberrarunt, quum Elias dixit, *Mundum sex mille annos duraturum*, nempe per duos mille annos mundum fore תֹהוּ, inanem & vacuum hoc est absque lege Divinâ, per duos mille annos תּוֹרָה, sub lege, reliquos vero duos mille fore יְמֵי מְשִׁיחַ. dies Messiæ. *Synag. Jud. c.* 50.

† Annal. Tom. poster.

This was the time when *the* * *Scepter was upon departing from Judah*; now were *Dniel*'s † weeks either fully compleated, or at leaſt drawing near a concluſion; and now was the *Temple yet ſtanding*, to which the Prophet *Malachi* had foretold, ‖ *The Lord whom they ſought ſhould ſuddainly come*, and which was to be made * *more glorious than the former*, as the Prophet *Haggai* had foretold, namely, by his Preſence in it; for in all other reſpects it was far inferiour. And this therefore was the time when the *Jews* moſt reaſonably might, and when in fact they certainly did expect the promiſed *Messiah*; howſoever becauſe he came not with that

* Gen. 49. 10.

† Dan. 9. 24.

‖ Mal. 3. 1.

* Hag. 2. 9.

pomp and ſplendour they had hoped for; but on the contrary, put on a mean garb, and was attended with a ſmall and very ordinary retinue, and expoſed to the moſt ignominious of deaths, that of the Croſs, they would by no means own him for the perſon they had waited for.

However their incredulity is no confutation of the truth of what was thus ſignally accompliſhed, our bleſſed Lord * condeſcending to be born of a Virgin as had been † foretold of him, and at the time (as I have ſhewed) and in the very ‖ place pre-ſignified, * having had the promiſed *Elias* for his fore-runner; that is to ſay, ‡ *John* the Baptiſt, who was † *to go before him in the ſpirit and power of Elias*, having ‖ preached his Father's Will to Mankind, and having in all points lived and died as had been before declared concerning him, as might eaſily be ſhewn. Here is ſuch an admirable complication of Events, in the accompliſhment of divers ſorts of Prophecies, as can never be hoped for in any one beſides. And by conſequence we have here a very peculiar and unqueſtionable proof of that divine Providence I have undertaken to aſſert.

* S. Matt. 1. 18, 19, 20. & S. Lu. 1. 34, 35.
† Iſa. 7. 14.
‖ S. Matt. 2. 5, 6. S. Luk. 2. 11.
* S. Matt. 11. 14.
‡ S. Luk. 1. 17.
‖ S. Joh. 7. 16. S. Lu. 4. 43, 44.

Eſpecially conſidering that this our Saviour's appearance at the time pointed at in theſe Predictions; that is to ſay, that he

he lived and died a little before the diſſolution of the Jewiſh Polity and Temple, is teſtified not only in Scripture, but (which perhaps may ſignifie more with ſome Men) by * *Joſephus* the Jew, who in his relation concerning him queſtions, *Whether he may call him a Man, or not;* (if that paſſage in him be genuine, as † S. *Jerome* ſuppoſes, and Dr. ‖ *Voſſius* has undertaken to prove it is) and by * *Suetonius*, and † *Tacitus*. And our ſelves who bear his Name, and make profeſſion of his Religion, are a notorious inſtance of the Belief of it.

* Antiq. l. 18. c. 4.

† Catal. Scriptor. Eccleſ.

‖ De Sibyll. orac. c. 11.

* Impulſore Chreſto, *Suet. in vit.* Claud. c. 25. Sic etiam, *Perperam Chreſtiani pronunciatur.* Tertull. Apol. c. 3.

† Auctor nominis ejus Chriſtus, qui Tiberio imperitante, per Procuratorem Pontium Pilatum ſupplicio affectus erat. *Tac. Annal. l.* 15.

But to make the matter yet more plain, to the conviction of the moſt incredulous, I will deſcend a ſtep lower, and only demand that the holy Scriptures be admitted not to have been any late fiction, but to have been written about the times they are ordinarily aſcribed to, the Old Teſtament before the time of our Saviour *Jeſus Chriſt*'s appearance in the World, and the New during the Lives of his Apoſtles. For even ſo I may obſerve two farther Prophecies, the viſible and laſting accompliſhment whereof, is a manifeſt token of their coming from God, and ſo at once

proves the divine Authority of the Scriptures, and that which I now produce them for, an over-ruling Providence.

1. The former is the Pre-assurance that was given of the vast Extent of our Saviour's Kingdom, which he was to erect in the World. * *The heathen were to be given him for his inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for his possession.* † *The Mountain of the Lord's house was to be established in the top of the mountains, and to be exalted above the hills: and all nations to flow unto it.* || *From the rising of the Sun unto the going down thereof, his Name was to be great among the Gentiles, and in every place incense to be offered in his Name, and a pure offering.* * *He was to set judgment in the earth; and the Isles were to wait for his Law;* † *was to be given for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison-house; and* || *to be salvation unto the end of the earth.* He was in the time of the Roman Empire * to have a Church, or spiritual *Kingdom set up, that should never be destroyed, but should break in pieces and consume*; that is, should prevail over, *all the other Kingdoms, and should stand for ever.* And there was

* Psal. 2. 8.
† Isa. 2. 2. Mic. 4. 1.
|| Mal. 1. 11.
* Isa. 42. 4.
† Ver. 6, 7.
|| Isa. 49. 6.
* Dan. 2. 44.

to

to be * *given him Dominion, and Glory, and a Kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages ſhould ſerve him,* even *an everlaſting Dominion, that ſhould not paſs away, and his Kingdom that which ſhould not be deſtroyed.* The plain meaning of which Declarations, and divers others to the ſame purpoſe which I ſhall not ſtand to recite, was that by his appearance in the World, at the time appointed of the Father, he ſhould break down *the partition-wall* betwixt *Jews* and *Gentiles*, and ſettle one ſpiritual Kingdom conſiſting of both, which ſhould be of very large extent, and ſhould continue as long as the Sun and Moon endure. * Dan. 7. 14.

Which Prediction our bleſſed Lord alſo himſelf repeats, to let his Enemies the *Jews* ſee how vain all their attempts for the ſuppreſſion of his Doctrine would be; inaſmuch as though they ſhou'd proceed to vent their utmoſt malice againſt him by lifting him upon the Croſs, they would certainly find this to prove, contrary to their expectation, a means of gaining him Proſelytes amongſt all ſorts of people. † *If I be lifted up from the Earth,* ſaith our Saviour, *I will draw all Men unto me:* Hereby declaring, that his cruel and barbarous Death would be ſufficient to prevail upon all that would be † S. Joh. 12. 32.

perſwaded to attend to it, and would undoubtedly engage a very great part of Mankind to become his Diſciples. He would be ready to receive them all, *Gentiles* as well as *Jews*; and one remarkable effect of his Sufferings was to be this, That great numbers of both ſhould flock to him, and embrace his Religion, and hope for Salvation only through his Mediation.

This might ſeem a ſtrange paradox to thoſe who fanſied that our Saviour's death muſt neceſſarily put an end to all his pretences. But it was no more than God the Father had pre-determined ſhould be, and therefore had ſo frequently preſignified, than our Saviour himſelf here promiſed, and than was afterwards made good, to the Converſion or Confuſion of all who had ſet themſelves againſt him. For immediately upon his Aſcenſion into Heaven, and the Deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt, his Apoſtles * *went forth and preached every-where, the Lord working with them, and confirming their words with ſigns following.* Whence it came to paſs, that his Doctrine was much ſooner made known, in the ſeveral parts of the World, than could have been imagined; and prodigious numbers were quickly brought over to it.

* S. Mar. 16 20.

S. *Peter*

S. *Peter* converted no fewer than * *three thouſand Souls* at one Sermon in *Jeruſalem*. And preſently after († Dr. *Lightfoot* thinks on the ſame day, which he conjectures too might moſt probably be the ſame ‖ great day of Pentecoſt, wherein they were thus miraculouſly inſpired, or ſome other day of the ſame feaſt) the number of Proſelytes were reckoned to be * *five thouſand*. And when the Word had been preached a-while in this and other Jewiſh Cities, and met not with a due reception from this obdurate Nation, the Apoſtles thought it time to † *turn themſelves to the Gentiles*. Accordingly they took their ſeveral courſes, as might ſeem beſt to anſwer the great End of their Ambaſſage, both to preach the Word, and *miniſter about holy things*, and to ordain others to the ſame Office. And it pleaſed God to give them that ſucceſs, that by their Miniſtry *the Word of God grew and prevailed* againſt all the oppoſition, and all the moſt inveterate malice, and moſt exquiſite cruelties of its Enemies. Inſomuch that both the Scriptures and other Writers inform us of divers Churches they had planted in their life-time; to ſome of which S. *Paul* directed his Epiſtles, and S. *Peter* his firſt to ſome others of them; and others again are mentioned in S. *John*'s Revelation.

* Act. 2. 41.

† Com. in Act. Apoſt. 3. 1.

‖ Harm. Act. 3, & 4.

* Act. 4. 4.

† Act. 13. 46.

And near about the time of this Apoſtle's death, *Pliny*, Proprætor of *Bithynia*, wrote to the Emperor *Trajan*, acquainting him, that his Orders againſt the Chriſtians could not be purſued * without bringing many of every age, rank, and ſex into danger; foraſmuch as the infection (as he expreſſes it) had reached not only the greater Cities, but their leſſer Towns, and Country-Villages. To which I ſhould alſo have added the teſtimony of *Tiberianus*, Preſident of *Palæſtine*, † profeſſing all his ſeverities unable to overcome the *Galileans*; that is, the Chriſtians; but that I think the ſingularly learned Mr. *Dodwell* ‖ has ſaid enough to prove his Letter ſpurious.

* L. 10. Ep. 97.

† Uſſerii Append. Ignat.

‖ Diſſert. de pauc. Martyr. par. 23, 24.

However *Juſtin Martyr*, who flouriſhed, as * *Euſebius* teſtifies, and the beginning of his own ſecond Apology evinces, μετ' ὀ πολὺ τῶν Ἀποστόλων, *not long after the Apoſtles*, affirms that no ſufferings could affright the Chriſtians of his time from the profeſſion they had taken upon them; but the more they were perſecuted, the more they encreaſed, and † as they that roſe up againſt them multiplied, ſo did thoſe on the other hand that were brought over to them. And *Clement* of *Alexandria*, who lived about ſixty years after him,

* Eccl. Hiſt. l. 2. c. 13.

† Οὐκ ὁρᾷς, ὅσῳ πλείονες κολάζονται, τοσούτῳ πλεονάζουσας ἄλλας. Ep. ad Diogn.

him, declares that in his days * the Doctrine of our Master was not confined to *Judea*, as Philoſophy was to *Greece*, but ſpread it ſelf over the face of the Earth, both *Greeks* and *Barbarians* in each City, and Village, and Nation, ſometimes whole Houſes together, and at other times ſingle perſons only being converted by it, and not a few of the Philoſophers themſelves. So his Contemporary *Tertullian* profeſſes, that * the greateſt part of almoſt every City were Chriſtians, and that their Enemies grew jealous of them, and made † complaint that their City was beſet with them, and that in the Countries, in the Caſtles, in the Iſles, were Chriſtians; and that it grieved them to ſee how every ſex, age, condition, and dignity was inclined to this Name. And again, ‖ *We*, ſaith he, *have filled all places amongſt you, your Cities, Iſles, Caſtles, Burroughs, Councils, Tents, Tribes, Decuries, the Palace, the Senate, the Forum, and we leave you only your Temples free from us.*

And after theſe *Origen* for the next Century, and *Arnobius* and *Lactantius* for the former part of the following teach,

* Ὁ δὲ γε τῆς Διδασκαλίας τῆς ἀληθείας λόγος οὐκ ἔμεινεν ἐν Ἰουδαίᾳ μόνῃ, &c. Strom. l. 6. p. 667.

* Pars penè major civitatis cujuſque in ſilentio & modeſtia agimus. *Ad Scap.*

† Obſeſſam vociferantur civitatem, in agris, in caſtellis, in inſulis Chriſtianos, &c. *Apol.* c. 1.

‖ Veſtra omnia implevimus, &c. *Apol.* c. 37.

teach, that * all about both *Greeks* and *Barbarians*, in great multitudes, forsaking the Precepts of their Fathers and their supposed Deities, betook themselves to the Laws of *Moses*, and the words of the Doctrine of *Jesus Christ*, † though with the apparent hazard of their lives, ‖ both wise and unwise, Philosophers and others, in all places, embracing his Religion; that * Christianity had spread it self, throughout the World, softening men's manners, and teaching them Candour, Meekness, and Condescension; that the greatest Wits, Orators, Grammarians, Rhetoricians, Lawyers, Physicians, Philosophers entertained it, renouncing their former opinions and practices, and choosing rather to study the Precepts of the Gospel; that Servants could be content to endure all the severities of their merciless and enraged Masters, Wives to be parted from their implacable Husbands, Children to be dis-inherited by their incensed Parents, than forsake the Christian Faith, and treacherously withdraw themselves from that spiritual Warfare wherein they had engaged;

* Πᾶσα δὲ Ἑλλὰς καὶ βάρβαρος ἡ κατὰ τὴν οἰκουμένην ζηλωτὰς ἔχει μυρίους, καταλιπόντας τοὺς πατρῴους νόμους, καὶ νομιζομένους Θεοὺς, τῆς τηρήσεως τῶν Μωσέως νόμων, καὶ τῆς μαθητείας τῶν Χριστοῦ λόγων. Orig. Philocal. c. 1.

† Καὶ μὲν ὀπὶ θανάτῳ δὲ πρὸς τὸ μισεῖσθαι κινδυνευόντων τῶν τοῦ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ λόγων παραδεξαμένων. Ibid.

‖ Πανταχόσε κηρυχθῆναι τῆς οἰκουμένης, ὥστε Ἕλληνας καὶ βαρβάρους, σοφοὺς, τε καὶ ἀνοήτους προσθέσθαι τῇ δι' Ἰησοῦ θεοσεβείᾳ. Ibid.

* Nulla jam natio est tam barbari moris & mansuetudinem nesciens, quæ non ejus amore versa molliverit asperitatem suam, &c. *Arnob. adv. Gent. l. 2.*

engaged; that when dreadfull punishments were decreed for all that adhered to the Laws of this Religion, it grew by this means, and people were only the more vigorous, and the readier to proceed undauntedly against all the Menaces, and all those Interdicts which were designed to work upon their fears, and all the Prohibitions they met with served but to fix them the firmer in the Faith; that the divine Law was received * from the rising to the setting of the Sun, and every Age, Sex, Nation, and Country set themselves to serve God with one and the same Mind, and everywhere was the same readiness to suffer, and every where the same contempt of death; insomuch that it was above the power of racks or fires to overcome, † not Men only, but Women and Children, or but to squeeze a groan from them, by reason of that inspired Patience, whereby their God had condescended to prepare them for this holy Conflict; and in a word, that ‖ there was none of the remotest corners of the Earth, whither this divine Religion had not penetrated,

* Cum vero ab ortu solis usque ad occasum lex divina suscepta sit, & omnis sexus, omnis ætas, & gens, & regio, unis ac paribus animis Deo serviant, &c. *Lactant. Instit. l.* 5. *c.* 13.

† Deest illis inspirata patientia. Nostri autem (ut de viris taceam) pueri & mulierculæ tortores suos tacitè vincunt, & exprimere illis gemitum nec ignis potest. *Ibid.*

‖ Ut jam nullus esset terrarum angulus tam remotus, quo non Religio Dei penetrasset, nulla denique natio tam feris moribus vivens, ut non suscepto Dei cultu ad justitiæ opera mitesceret. *Lact. de mort. Perseq. c.* 3.

trated, no Nation living ſo void of all humanity, as not to be mollified, and brought to a better temper by it.

Notwithſtanding that it came to paſs, as our Saviour had ſore-warned his Diſciples, that the Profeſſion of his Name was attended with frequent Tribulations, and Afflictions, and Perſecutions, and the cruelleſt and moſt barbarous Tortures and Deaths, ſuch was the Courage and Reſolution of the Chriſtians in thoſe early Ages of our Religion, that *there were added to the Church daily ſuch as ſhould be ſaved.* Till at length *Kings became its nurſing Fathers, and Queens its nurſing Mothers*; and they that before had met together to worſhip God, *in Mountains, and in Deſarts, and in Dens, and Caves of the Earth,* that by this means they might eſcape the diſcovery of their Enemies, were encouraged to do it publickly, in places purpoſely dedicated to his Service, and the greateſt, and the wiſeſt, and the beſt of Men gloried in the Croſs of Chriſt. *So mightily grew the Word of God and prevailed* againſt all the impediments it had to conteſt with, and ſettled it ſelf in the World, to the Honour of God, and the comfort and encouragement of its Profeſſors, but to the ſhame and terrour of its obſtinate Adverſaries.

And

And though divers of the Churches, that were then and afterwards, have ſince provoked God by their iniquities to deliver them up to their own blindneſs and hardneſs of heart, and either to let them be over-run with *Mahometans*, or perhaps to relapſe into Paganiſm, yet the many Chriſtian Nations that are at this day, are a ſufficient indication, that God is not forgetfull of this his Promiſe. And theſe, together with all thoſe Parts that formerly have been Chriſtian, and might ſtill have continued ſo, had they but minded to walk worthy their moſt holy Profeſſion, and thoſe others that will probably be hereafter brought over to the flock of Chriſt, are a ſenſible proof of the accompliſhment of this memorable Prediction, that our bleſſed Saviour *ſhould draw all Men after him, and that the heathen ſhould be given him for his Inheritance, and the utmoſt parts of the Earth for his Poſſeſſion.*

None of thoſe Pſeudo-chriſts before mentioned were able to plant a Doctrine, or leave a Sect behind them, that ſhould continue any time after them. But our bleſſed Lord, the true *Meſſiah*, had the number of his Followers ſoon encreaſed to a Miracle, his Goſpel proving wonderfully prevalent whereſoever it was preached.

preached. *His saving Word, like a Sunbeam,* saith * *Eusebius, enlightned the whole World, the sound of the holy Evangelists and Apostles going out, as had been foretold of them in the holy Scriptures, into all Lands, and their speech unto the ends of the Earth: So that throughout all Cities and Villages sprang up Churches, abounding with an immense multitude of believers; and they that had from their Infancy been addicted to Superstition and the worship of Devils, betook themselves to the service of the one God, the Maker of all things, according* † *to the divine and sober Religion, that our Saviour had sown amongst mankind.*

* Hist. Eccl. l. 2. c. 3.

† Δι' ἐνθέου καὶ σώφρονος θρησκείας τῆς ὑπὸ τοῦ Σωτῆρος ἡμῶν τῷ τῶν ἀνθρώπων βίῳ κατασπαρείσης.

So much concerning the former of these Prophecies, namely of the vast Extent of our Saviour's Kingdom.

2. The other was the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, and Dispersion of the *Jews*, that they should be no more a People, should no more have any Polity, or settled Government amongst them. And this consists of two branches.

1. The Destruction of *Jerusalem* and the Temple.
2. The Dissolution of the Jewish Polity, and Dispersion of the *Jews* into all

all parts, to continue a lasting Monument of God's just vengeance upon them, for all their impieties, and especially for their intolerable rage and malice in procuring the Crucifixion of our ever-blessed Saviour.

1. The Destruction of *Jerusalem* and the Temple. This the Prophet * *Daniel* had long before so plainly intimated, that their own Historian concludes, † they who should consult his Writings could not but admire the singular honour God had done him, in giving him thus to understand his Will, *which he had manifestly declared before-hand to the confusion of all those* Epicureans, *who deny a Providence*, and choose rather to ascribe all events either to Chance, or Mechanism, than to the hand of God. And the same Prediction our blessed Saviour repeated, assuring them that their magnificent Temple, wherein they so highly gloried, ‖ *should not have one stone left upon another, that should not be thrown down*; and that * *their Enemies should cast a trench about them, and compass them round, and keep them in on every side, and should lay their City even with the ground, and its Children within it*; and as to the time of this

* Ch. 9. 25.

† Τὸν αὐτὸν δὲ χρόνον Δανιὴλ ὃν περὶ τῆς Ῥωμαίων ἡγεμονίας ἀνεγεγράφει. Καὶ ὅτι ὑπ' ἐκείνων ἑάλω Ἱεροσόλυμα, &c. Joseph. Antiq. l. 10. c. 12.

‖ S. Matt. 24. 2.

* S. Luk. 19. 43, 44.

this vengeance, that it was not to be deferred beyond the present age. For so saith our Saviour, * *Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.* A Prediction as true, as it seemed to the *Jews* to be improbable. For † not many years had passed, after they had barbarously put to death the Lord of Glory, when (whilst part of that Generation were yet alive) *Titus Vespasian*, the Roman General, came against them, and cut them off with a very great slaughter, as ‖ *Josephus* their own Historian reports at large, their Temple being then burnt, and many of them buried in its ruines. At which time * were slain by the Enemy no fewer than eleven hundred thousand persons, and ninety seven thousand carried captive, besides the vast numbers that had perished before by the famine, and the pestilence, and the intestine fury of their fellow-citizens, and country-men.

* S. Mat. 24 34.

‖ Τεσσαράκοντα γὰρ ἔτη καὶ δύο, οἶμαι, ἀφ' οὗ ἐσταύρωσαν τὸν Ἰησοῦν, γεγονέναι ἐπὶ τὴν Ἱεροσολύμων καθαίρεσιν. Orig. c. Cels. l. 4.

‖ De bello Jud. l. 4. c. 21, &c.

* L. 7. c. 17.

And that which makes the completion of this Prediction the more remarkable is, what † *Ammianus Marcellinus* has recorded concerning *Julian*'s fruitless attempt for rebuilding this Temple thus destroyed; namely, that *when* Alypius *of* Antioch, *with the assistance of the Governour of the Province,*

† L. 23.

Province, had undertaken it, fearfull balls of fire issuing forth near the foundation, and sometimes burning the work-men, rendered the place inaccessible, and constrained them to desist from their enterprize. The very same account that is given both by * *Socrates* and † *Sozomen*, except that the former of them differs in this circumstance, that he speaks of the fire, || not as arising from the foundation, but descending from above; and the other adds a material intimation, omitted by other Authors, that * what they did in this case was done on purpose to defeat our Saviour's Prophecy. And † S. *Chrysostome*, together with this, mentions also two other attempts to this purpose, the one under *Adrian*, the other under *Constantine*, which both proved likewise abortive, though not interrupted in so miraculous a manner. And though there was a City built by the Emperour *Ælius Adrianus*, in the room of *Jerusalem*, yet neither was it called *Jerusalem*, but † *Ælia*, from the Emperour who built it; nor was it ever the Metropolis of the *Jews*, as *Jerusalem* was; but on the con-

* Hist. Eccl. l. 3. c. 20.

† Hist. Eccl. l. 5. c. 22.

|| Πῦρ ἐξ οὐρανοῦ κατασκῆψαν.

* ὑπολαβόντες δύνασθαι κατορθοῦν τὸ ἐγχείρημα, καὶ ψευδεῖς ἀπελέγξαι τοῦ Χριστοῦ τὰς προῤῥήσεις.

† Adv. Judæos, l. 2.

|| Ælius Adrianus, à quo postea de ruinis Hierusalem urbs Ælia condita est. *D. Hieron. in Dan.* 9. *ult.* ἡ μετέπειτα συστᾶσα Ῥωμαϊκὴ πόλις τὴν ἐπωνυμίαν ἀμείψασα, εἰς τὴν τοῦ Κρατοῦντος Αἰλίου Ἀδριανοῦ τιμὴν Αἰλία προσαγορεύεται. Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. 4. c. 6.

*Baron. Annal. To. 2. 137. 2, 3. trary had a * Sow and Pigs ſet over its Gate towards *Bethlehem*, as it were in direct oppoſition to the *Jews*; nor was it ever famous for any thing beſides our Saviour's Tomb there.

2. The Diſſolution of the Jewiſh Polity, and Diſperſion of the *Jews* into all parts, to continue a laſting Monument of God's juſt vengeance upon them for all their impieties, and eſpecially for their intolerable rage and malice, in procuring the crucifixion of our ever-bleſſed Saviour. * *There was to be great diſtreſs in the land, and wrath upon this People.* † *They were to fall by the edge of the Sword, and to be led captive into all Nations, and Jeruſalem to be trodden down of the Gentiles, untill the time of the Gentiles be fulfilled*, according to our Saviour's Prediction. And thus much || S. *Chryſoſtome* urges to have been declared by the Prophet *Daniel*, and admitted for truth by *Joſephus*, in that the Prophet (from the information of the Angel *Gabriel*, fore-telling their Captivity by *Antiochus Epiphanes*, limited it to a certain time, after which they ſhould be delivered from his Tyranny, (as they had alſo long before had a time prefix'd for their Deliverance out of *Egypt*, and had been delivered accordingly,) but

*S. Luk. 21. 23.
† Ver. 24.
|| Adv Jud. l. 2.

in

in this Prophecy of the overthrow of their City and Nation by the *Romans*, he makes no mention of any recovery, but affirms at large that their City and Temple ſhould be deſtroyed, acquainting them with the Sufferings that were to come upon them, but giving them no encouragement to hope for a releaſe from them. Which it might have been expected that he would have done, if he had foreſeen that they ſhould be delivered again, as they had been formerly.

* *The Sacrifice and Oblation* was alſo utterly to *ceaſe*, † *and a pure Offering* to ſucceed inſtead hereof, a more holy and ſpiritual Worſhip, ſupplying the place of their Carnal Ordinances, and Legal Offerings. And to this purpoſe our Saviour informed the Woman of *Samaria*, ‖ that "the wonted Ceremonious Worſhip "ſhould have an end, there ſhould be "*no Sacrifice in Jeruſalem, no Image at* "*Samaria, no Ephod at Jeruſalem, no Te-* "*raphim at Samaria*, (as the learned * Dr. *Lightfoot* comments upon our Saviour's words,) but that thoſe places, and that manner of Worſhip ſhould fall and be aboliſhed; "and that it was there-"fore needleſs for her to enquire whe-"ther *Jeruſalem*, or *Gerizim*, were the "more eminent place of Worſhip, for "the

* Dan. 9. 27. & ch. 12. 11. † Mal. 1. 11.

‖ S. Joh. 4. 21, 23, 24.

* Third part of the Harmony of the four Evangeliſts.

" the time was juſt now in coming, when " neither the one, nor the other, ſhould " be the place of Worſhip at all. *Woman, believe me*, ſaith our Saviour, *the hour cometh, when ye ſhall neither in this Mountain, nor yet at Jeruſalem, worſhip the Father. The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worſhippers ſhall worſhip the Father in ſpirit and in truth; for the Father ſeeketh ſuch to worſhip him. God is a ſpirit, and they that worſhip him, muſt worſhip him in ſpirit and in truth.*

And not only their Worſhip, but their Polity too was to have a period put to it, by the juſt Judgment of God upon them for their ſins. * *The Scepter was to depart from Judah, and the Law-giver from between his feet.* " He that had the Do- " minion, was to be taken away from " *Judah*, and the Scribe from his Chil- " dren's Children, as the *Chaldee* Paraphraſt expounds this Prophecy. Or as the *Jeruſalem Targum* has it to the ſame effect, " Kings, or as *Jonathan*'s Kings " and Princes or Preſidents, were to " ceaſe from the Houſe of *Judah*, and " Doctors that teach the Law from his " Children's Children. This indeed was not to be accompliſhed till the coming of the *Shiloh*, † the *Meſſiah*, ſays the forementioned Paraphraſt, ‖ the King the *Meſſiah*,

* Gen. 49. 10.

מְשִׁיחָא ‖
סַלְקָא †
מְשִׁיחָא

ſiah, ſay both *Jonathan's* and the *Jeruſalem Targum*; but then this implies, according to all common conſtruction, that at his coming, or at leaſt not long after it, they might reaſonably expect to be reduced to this deſolate condition.

Nor were they only to loſe their Government, and be ſubjected to a foreign Power, but to be caſt out of their own Land, and ſcattered over the ſeveral parts of the Earth. They had been threatned upon their rebellion againſt Almighty God (of which they could not poſſibly give a greater inſtance than in crucifying his only-begotten and well-beloved Son) they had been threatned; I ſay to * *be removed into all the Kingdoms of the Earth, to be* † *ſcattered among all people, from the one end of the Earth even unto the other, and* ‖ *to be led away captive into all nations.* They were * to *be driven out of God's houſe*, to be no longer owned by him as his People, his *Segullah*, his choſen and beloved Nation; for he would † *love them no more*, he would not always continue that peculiar favour to them, which they had ſo long enjoyed, but had moſt groſly abuſed. He had decreed to ‖ *caſt them away, becauſe they did not hearken unto him, that they ſhould be wanderers among the nations.*

* Deut 28.25.
† Ver. 64.
‖ S.Luk.21.24.
* Hoſ.9.17.
† Ibid.
‖ Ver. 17.

The ſumm is, that the Jewiſh Church and Polity were but temporary, and were therefore to have an end, when the meaſure of their iniquities ſhould be filled up. That obdurate People were then to remain no longer in their own Land, but to have their Worſhip, as well as their City and Temple aboliſhed, and were to become thenceforward a ſort of vagabonds in the Earth, having no Nation, or Government of their own, nor being permitted to live in any one Country, but diſperſed by parcels over the ſeveral Kingdoms, and other Territories of the Earth.

And whether this remarkable Prophecy has been ſince as remarkably fulfilled, is no manner of Queſtion. For as for the ten Tribes, it ſeems generally believed, that they never returned into *Palæſtine*, after their Captivity by * *Pul* the King of *Aſſyria*, and † *Tiglath-Pileſer* his Succeſſour, and ‖ *Shalmaneſer* after him. * *Manaſſeh Ben Iſrael* thinks he has ſufficiently proved it; and † *Calvert* owns it to be the received opinion of both *Jews* and *Chriſtians*, at leaſt as to the greateſt part of them. Though withall he reckons himſelf ‖ to have confuted it, by the divers Arguments he brings againſt it. Whether of theſe is in the right, I ſhall not now ſtand

*1 Chron. 5. 26. & 2 King. 15. 19.
†2 King. 15. 29.
‖ 2 King. 17. 6.
* *Spes Iſraelis*, Sect. 16, &c.
† Naphtali, l. 1. c. 1.
‖ L. 2. c. 1, &c.

ſtand to enquire, but only ſhall obſerve, that if the former, then what if this Prediction related to the ten Tribes was undoubtedly executed upon them long before our Saviour's Incarnation, and not for his Death, but for their Idolatries, and all their other Crimes, whereby they had provoked God to caſt them off; if the latter, they were then united to, and included in the Kingdom of *Judah*, and ſo muſt be ſuppoſed to have ever ſince undergone the ſame fate with the two Tribes. And *Joſephus* * tells us, what miſerable ſlaughter was made of theſe at the ſacking of *Jeruſalem*, what vaſt numbers of them were deſtroyed, and others carried into captivity by the *Romans*. And under the Emperor *Adrian* † other Writers inform us that their calamities encreaſed upon them, when being engaged in an inſurrection againſt him, ‖ an incredible multitude of them were put to death, and their Leader *Barchochab* being taken and made to ſuffer for his rebellion, the remainder of them were forbid to come near *Jeruſalem*, and * a Guard ſet to keep them off, if they ſhould attempt it.

* De bello Jud. l. 6. c. 45. & alibi.

† D. Chryſoſt. adv. Jud. l. 2. & Euſeb. Eccl. hiſt. l. 4. c. 2.

‖ Πολλὰς μυριάδας Ἰουδαίων — ἀναιρεῖ. Ibid.

* Sulpic. Sever. ſacr. hiſt. l. 2.

And * *Tertullian* and † *S. Cyprian* testifie for their times, that *they were dispersed, and wandred about, banished from their native air and soil, and seeking entertainment amongst other nations, being without a Name, and without God for their King, and not permitted to set a foot upon their own land, a privilege that no strangers are denied.* And under *Constantine* the Great, || their Ears were cut off, and a mark impressed upon their Body, betokening their Rebellion, and so they were carried about as a spectacle, for the terrour of others that might have been inclinable to the like attempts; as *S. Chrysostome* relates, in the place before referred to, and * *Baronius* from him, who places it in the 315th year of our Saviour. And the same † *S. Chrysostome* affirms concerning them, (and wonders at the Providence of God so ordering it,) that whilst all the World where they might not offer Sacrifice was open to them, and they had liberty to betake themselves to the several parts of it, *Jerusalem*, the only place appointed

* Dispersi, palabundi, cœli & soli sui extorres, vagantur per orbem, sine nomine, sine Deo Rege, quibus nec advenarum jure terram patriam saltem vestigio salutare conceditur. *Tert. Apol. c.* 21.

† Dispersi & palabundi vagantur, soli & cœli sui profugi, per hospitia aliena jactantur. *D. Cypr. de Idololat.*

|| Adv. Judæos, l. 2.

* Annal. Eccl. To. 3. 315. 9.

† Καὶ τὸ δὴ θαυμαστὸν καὶ παράδοξον, ἡ μὲν οἰκουμένη πᾶσα ἀνεῖται τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις, ἔνθα οὐκ ἔξεστι θύειν· μόνη δὲ ἡ Ἱερουσαλὴμ ἄβατος γέγονεν, ἔνθα μόνον θύειν ἐξῆν. Adv. Jud. l. 1. p. 318.

pointed for this ſort of Worſhip, was inacceſſible to them.

And it is viſible to this day, that they ſtill remain, as he ſpeaks of them in another place, * *Vagabonds and fugitives and wanderers, travellers both by Sea and Land, without any fix'd and certain habitations, deprived of their Freedom, Country, and Prieſthood, and all that they were wont to value themſelves upon, ſcattered amongſt barbarous and innumerable people, hated of all Men, abominated, and apt to be hardly dealt with by all.* What Nation is there under Heaven, that bears not teſtimony to this truth? where is it that ſome of them are not to be met with? and yet what place is there, that has any conſiderable number of them? They have nowhere any Prince or Governour of their own, but live under ſome other Power, no-where any ſettled Polity diſtinct from that of the Country where they ſojourn, no Prieſthood, no convenience of offering up any Sacrifice, as heretofore during their abode in *Canaan*, no-where the freedom of their own Laws, are no-where beloved or much regarded.

* Καὶ ἀλῆται, καὶ φυγάδες, καὶ πλάνοι, &c. D. Chryſoſt. in Pſ 8. To. 1. p. 577.

And yet they remain Jews ſtill, diſtinguiſhed from all other people, and as zealous as ever for their own Law, and as profeſs'd Enemies as ever to that moſt holy

holy Religion, the contempt whereof has coſt them ſo dear for many Generations: God in his juſt judgment upon them having ſo ordered it, that they continue a perpetual Monument of his heavy Diſpleaſure againſt them, and a ſure Evidence of the Truth and Certainty of the Predictions, both of our bleſſed Saviour, and of the Prophets who had been before him. * Whilſt they only abuſed, affronted, and ſlew the Servants of God, the Meſſengers that he had commiſſioned to warn them of their ſins, and the puniſhments due to them, *killing the Prophets, and ſtoneing thoſe that were ſent to them,* he was ready to be reconciled, and to paſs by their iniquities; but ſince they had dared to crucifie his Son, his dearly-beloved Son, the caſe has been altered with them, and their wound has been incurable; they have not been in a capacity to regain their former ſtation, nor to make any figure in the World. As of old he moſt wonderfully manifeſted his Providence over them, in conducting them into, and ſettling them in the good Land of *Canaan*, in vouchſafing them his eſpecial Preſence, in magnifying them above their Enemies round about, and in all the

* Ἕως μὲν γὰρ εἰς τοὺς ἄλλους ἡμαρτάνετε, ἐπυγχάνεσθε συγγνώμης, σφαγὰς ἀναιρεθέντες, καὶ λιθαζόμενοι· ἐπειδὴ δὲ εἰς τὸν δεσπότην τὰς χεῖρας ἐξετείνατε, ἀνίατον γέγονεν ὑμῶν τὸ ἕλκος λοιπόν. Ibid.

Miracles

Miracles he wrought for them; ſo doth he it now alſo in a very eminent manner, in thus ſignalizing them from amongſt the reſt of the World, to * *become an aſtoniſhment, a proverb, and a by-word among all nations, whither the Lord ſhall lead them*, as he had threatned by *Moſes* to deal with them upon their diſobedience. Which I have the rather choſen to inſiſt upon, becauſe being plain matter of fact, at this time, it leaves no room to doubt whether God has been mindfull to make good his Predictions in this reſpect; and by conſequence the conſideration hereof adminiſters an irrefragable Argument for the proof of an over-ruling Providence. Thus much of Prophecies, and their ſuitable accompliſhments.

* Deut. 28. 37.

2. Miracles are another extraordinary and very convincing and ſatisfactory evidence of the interpoſition of Providence, and which may well ſilence all its moſt audacious Adverſaries. Theſe are what no natural Power can poſſibly effect. And therefore when we either ſee them, or are otherwiſe well aſſured that they have been wrought, it is intolerably unreaſonable not to believe them to have proceeded from a ſupernatural Operation. Whatſoever evaſions may be found out in divers

vers other caſes, for avoiding the force of whatever Arguments are brought for a Providence, there is no pretence for it here. For Miracles are an ocular Demonſtration, that there is ſome ſupream uncontroulable Power, that can upon occaſion invert the uſual courſe of things, bringing its ends about in an unwonted manner.

But no-where is this ſort of evidence ſet forth with that advantage, as in the holy Scriptures both of the Old and New Teſtament, each of which abound with very ſurprizing inſtances of this nature. Such in the firſt place was the univerſal Deluge, which waſhed away the old World,

* Gen. 6. 17. but whereof * *Noah* had been fore-warned,

† Gen. 7. 23. & 2 *S.* Pet. 2. 5. and from which † himſelf and his family were wonderfully preſerved, to re-people

‖ Gen. 19. 24, &c. the Earth. Such was the deſtruction ‖ of *Sodom* and *Gomorrah* by fire from Heaven. And ſuch alſo (though in yet a leſs de-

* Exod. 7, &c. gree) were the divers * ſorts of Plagues, that were brought upon *Egypt* by the Miniſtry of *Moſes*, and moſt of them re-

† Ch. 14. 21, 22. moved again at his requeſt, and his † dividing the Sea, and making it ſtand up as a Wall on each ſide, while the *Iſraelites* paſſed through, and then cauſing it to return to its wonted courſe, and ſo to

‖ Ver. 27, 28. ‖ overwhelm *Pharaoh*, and all his Hoſt.

Such

Such was God's immediate Presence with his people, * in a Pillar of Cloud by day, and a Pillar of Fire by night, to direct them in their journey to the promised Land. Such likewise were † *Moses*'s bringing forth water out of the hard Rock, meerly by the stroke of a Rod; || *Joshua*'s stopping the Sun in the midst of its career; * *Elijah*'s multiplying the Widow's cruise of oyl, and barrel of meal; † and his confuting *Baal*'s Prophets by a fire from Heaven, that both consumed the Sacrifice, and dried up the water upon the Altar, and in the trenches that were about it; || the Stars fighting in their courses against *Sisera*, and his Army, when (as * *Josephus* relates) the Heavens poured down a prodigious storm of water and hail, which beating in their faces, discomposed them to that degree, as to render their bows, and slings, and swords useless for their defence; the falling of the Walls of *Jericho* † upon the People's shouting, and the Priests blowing with Trumpets; || the raining of Manna from Heaven for six days in the week, * and not the seventh; † the Quails that came up from the Sea, and covered the Camp; and many other instances of God's Almighty Power, together with || some few raised from death to life amongst the Jews.

* Ch. 13. 21, 22.
† Numb. 20. 11.
|| Josh. 10. 13.
* 1 King. 17. 16.
† Ch. 18 38, 39.
|| Jud. 5. 20.
* Antiq. l. 5. c. 6.
† Josh. 6. 20.
|| Exod. 16. 14, 15.
* Ver. 27.
† Ver. 13. & Numb. 11. 31.
|| 1 King. 17. 22. 2 King. 4. 35. & 13. 21.

And

And if we descend to the time of our blessed Saviour's incarnation, and the following Ages, it would be almost an endless task to recount, what sick were restored to health only with a word speaking, what lunaticks were recovered to a soundness of understanding, what lames, what leprous, what paralyticks, what deafs, what dumbs, what blinds were cured, what Demoniacks were dispossessed; how the dead were raised to life, the graves were opened, the rocks were split, the vail of the Temple was rent, the Earth quaked, the prison-doors unlocked and the chains fell off from the prisoners of their own accord; how * S. *Paul* was converted by a voice and a light from Heaven as he was travelling to *Damascus*; how our blessed Lord appeared to † S. *Stephen* at his Martyrdom; in what a wonderfull manner || the Holy-Ghost descended upon the Apostles on the day of Pentecost, and what were the stupendous effects of this descent, such as speaking with tongues, the interpretation of tongues, discerning of spirits, healing the sick, and infirm of divers diseases, casting out Devils, and the like. Some of which continued afterwards in the Church for some Ages, untill our Religion was sufficiently propagated and confirmed. As the generality

* Act. 9. 3, &c.
† Ch. 7. 55.
|| Ch. 2. 1, &c.

nerality of the Writers of thoſe times inform us, and amongſt others [1] *Juſtin Martyr*, [2] *Irenæus*, [3] *Tertullian*, [4] *Minucius Felix*, [5] *Origen*, [6] *Arnobius*, [7] S. *Auguſtine*, [8] S. *Jerome*, and [9] *Euſebius*.

[1] Apol. 1, & 2.
[2] L. 2. c. 57.
[3] Apol. c. 5, & c. 32. & ad Scap. c. 2.
[4] P. 89, 90.
[5] C. Celſ. l. 7. p. 334.
[6] Adv. Gentes. l. 2.
[7] Retract. l. 1. c. 13. & de civ. Dei, l. 22. c. 8. & alibi.
[8] De viro perfecto To. 9.
[9] L. 5. c. 7.

Whereto if we add, that a great part at leaſt of theſe Miracles were wrought in the ſight, as well of Heathens, as of Chriſtians, and many times for their advantage, and upon their perſons; and again, that they were not done privately, or in a corner, but openly and before the Sun, in the high-ways and the ſtreets, at feaſts and marriage-entertainments, in the fulleſt aſſemblies, and before the greateſt numbers of Spectators, and even of the moſt avowed Adverſaries to our Saviour and his Religion; and this not in one or ſome few Countries, but * as far as *India*, and amongſt the *Seres*, and the *Perſians*, and the *Medes*, in *Arabia*, in *Egypt*, in *Aſia*, in *Syria*, amongſt the *Galatians*, the *Parthians*, the *Phrygians*, in *Achaia*, *Macedonia*, *Epirus*, and in all the Iſles

* Enumerari enim poſſunt, atque in uſum computationis venire ea, quæ in India geſta ſunt, apud Seras, Perſas, & Medos, in Arabiâ, Ægypto, in Aſia, Syria, apud Galatas, &c. *Arnob. adv. Gent. l.* 2.

and

and Provinces, that either the riſing, or the ſetting Sun beholds, and in *Rome* it ſelf, with that ſucceſs, that notwithſtanding its inhabitants had been accuſtomed to *Numa*'s rites, and ſuperſtitions, yet overcome hereby, they made no delay to forſake their wonted manner of Worſhip, and betake themſelves to our moſt holy Religion, which they had ſeen thus wonderfully atteſted; if we reflect, I ſay, upon theſe things, it muſt unavoidably argue a great meaſure of folly in any one to require farther Evidence for the proof of what they are alledged for. For he that will not yet be convinced, might as well put us to prove that it is day at noon, that the whole is greater than a part, that a Cube, a Cylinder and a Triangle are not all one, that two and two make four, or any other the plaineſt Axiom whatſoever. Thus to ſtand out againſt the cleareſt light is a ſign only of a perverſe mind, and unwilling to be ſatisfied, not of any real want of ſatisfaction. And they muſt be beſides themſelves, that could behold theſe and other the like amazing operations, and not be affected with a ſenſe of that moſt mighty hand by which they were wrought.

Eſpecially if they ſhould obſerve withall, that theſe were not done caſually or at

at random, but when there was some singular occasion for them, and they might tend in a peculiar manner to God's glory. They were frequentest and most conspicuous amongst the *Israelites*, about the time of their Deliverance out of *Egypt*, and whilst they were under the conduct of their Law-giver *Moses*, and his Successour *Joshua*. And after this People were enured to the Law they had received, and were settled in the promised *Canaan*, they grew more rare; and seem to have been wrought only upon some singular emergencies; as in the case of * *Jeroboam*'s Calves, which he had set up in imitation of the *Egyptian* manner of Worship, which therefore gave occasion for a Prophet to be sent to *Bethel*, to prophecy against his Idolatrous Altar there, and to confirm his Prophecy by a succession of Miracles, † the rending of the Altar, and the withering of *Jeroboam*'s hand, and the restauration of it upon his submission; or the case of *Elijah* and *Elisha*, in whose time ‖ Idolatry was grown to that height under *Ahab*, that there was need of some extraordinary method to convince them, that not *Baal*, but the Lord was God, and that therefore their worship was due to him alone, and only in the way that himself had appointed. And again they were

* 1 King. 12 28.

† 1 King 13.4, 5, 6. & Josep. Antiq. l. 8. c. 3.

‖ 1 King. 16. 30, 31, 32, 33.

more illuſtrious at the firſt planting of our Religion, by our bleſſed Redeemer and his Apoſtles and Diſciples, and then abated as that came to be propagated and ſettled in the World, and ſo to ſtand in leſs need of their aſſiſtance. Whence both * S. *Chryſoſtome* and † S. *Auguſtine*, who lived in the latter part of the fourth and beginning of the fifty Century, acknowledge them to have ceaſed by their time. Not that God was not ſtill as able to work them as ever, nor as ready if he had ſeen it proper, but becauſe their buſineſs being already done, there was leſs need of them. Theſe therefore are another very convincing Proof of an over-ruling Providence.

* —ἀπὸ σημείων· ἀλλ' ὰ γίνεται ταῦτα, in 1 Tim. 3. 7. τὴν ἀπὸ τῶν σημείων ἔχοντες ἰσχύν· εἰ δὲ τὰ μὲν δυνάμεως ἐκείνης ἦν ἴχνος ὑπολέλειπται--περὶ ἐγκρατείας, l. 4.

† Cum enim Eccleſia Catholica per totum orbem diffuſa atque fundata ſit, nec miracula illa in noſtra tempora durare permiſſa ſunt. *De verâ religione*, c. 25.

Nor is it of any great importance which is here objected, "That the ſilence of "Heathen Authors concerning theſe Mi-"racles is a great obſtruction to their "credibility, and makes it very queſtio-"nable, whether ever they were wrought "or not. For how could it be, that ſo "many and ſo prodigious effects ſhould "have been brought to paſs, and no "more notice taken of them? Might it "not

" not rather have been expected, that the " World aſtoniſhed at them, ſhould have " taken care conſtantly to tranſmit their " memory from generation to generati- " on? at leaſt that as much regard ſhould " have been had to them, as has been had " to preſerve the remembrance of other " leſs ſurprizing occurrences? And this " method not having been obſerved, ex- " cept by ſome whoſe intereſt it was to " pretend ſomething of this nature, for " carrying on their own deſigns, there " is too juſt reaſon to ſuſpect the tradi- " tions that are of them, not to be of that " authority the weaker and more credu- " lous ſort of people, or thoſe that are " under the power of ſtrong prejudices " may imagine.

This is the Objection; and the Anſwer to it is very eaſie, conſidering the much greater authority we have for theſe Miracles, than for other hiſtorical Relations, which yet none ſeem to queſtion the truth of. Who doubts whether * *Alexander the Great* had *Ariſtotle* for his Tutor, or † took upon him to be called the Son of *Jupiter Ammon*? Whether ‖ *Cicero* were ever Conſul of *Rome*, or afterwards ſent into baniſhment, and after that beheaded?

* Diog. Laert. l. 5. in vit. Ariſtot.
† Q. Curt. l. 4.
‖ Plutar. in vita Cicer.

Whether * *Julius Cæſar* ever conquered this Iſland, or was † afterwards barbarouſly maſſacred by *Brutus* and his accomplices? Who doubts of theſe or other the like relations, ſince they are mentioned by Authors of good credit, and againſt whom there is no juſt exception? Yet we have much greater Authority for the Miracles I have been inſiſting upon. For if thoſe be recorded by ſome of the Hiſtorians, who wrote of the times wherein they were done, we have the teſtimony of the holy Scriptures, of the Fathers, and of Hiſtorians for theſe. If their Authors were Men of credit and veracity, ours much more. If they had no temptation to byaſs them in what they related, much leſs had ours, when they knew their teſtifying theſe things, and adhering to the Doctrines confirmed by them, was the ready way to ſet all the World againſt themſelves. And it is therefore an egregious inſtance of Partiality, to be willing to believe the former, and yet not believe the latter, whoſe authority, if duly attended to, will be found to be incomparably the greater.

* L. Flor. l. 3. c. 10. Sueton. in vitâ ejus c. 25. Jul. Cæſ. de bello Gall. c. 4. Plut. in vita J. Cæſ.

† Liv. Epit. 116. L. Flor. l. 4. c. 2. Plut. & Suet.

And

And this will be made yet more apparent, if we proceed farther to conſider the Objection,

1. As it reſpects the times of the Old Teſtament.
2. As it reſpects the times of Chriſtianity.

1. As it reſpects the times of the Old Teſtament, that is from the Creation to the coming of our bleſſed Lord, it will need no other anſwer than what is contained in theſe two following Propoſitions.

1. Divers of the Miracles of thoſe times are recorded alſo by Heathen Writers. The firſt and moſt remarkable that I have mentioned was the univerſal Deluge, which overwhelmed the Earth in the days of *Noah*, and from which himſelf only, and his wife, and children were preſerved. And that a tradition of this was continued amongſt the Heathens, muſt be owned, till ſome other account can be given of what **Ovid*, and † *Virgil*, and ‖ *Horace*, and * *Juvenal*, and the reſt of their Poets ſo commonly relate, concerning *Deucalion* and his Wife *Pyrrha*, re-peopling the Earth after a mighty Flood, which themſelves only had eſcaped.

* Metamorph. l. 1.
† Georg. l. 1.
‖ Carm. l. 1. Od. 2.
* Sat. 1.

ped. * *Lucian* gives such an account of it, as shews plainly to what it relates, telling us that they had escaped by getting into a great Ark, whither swine and horses and lions and serpents came to them by pairs, and were preserved, whilst the rest of the World were drowned. And † *Plutarch* from the Mythologists speaks of a Dove sent forth by this *Deucalion* out of his Ark, which informed him of the increase of the waters, by its return to him for shelter, and again of their abatement by forsaking him to shift for it self.

* Οἱ μὲν οὖν πολλοὶ Δευκαλίωνα, &c. De Dea Syr.

† Οἱ μὲν οὖν μυθολόγοι τῷ Δευκαλίωνι φασι περιστερὰν ἐκ τῆς λάρνακος ἀφιεμένην, δήλωμα γένεσθαι· χειμῶνος μὲν, εἴσω πάλιν ἐνδυομένην· εὐδίας δὲ, ἀποπτᾶσαν. Plut. de Solertia animalium.

The dismal and stupendous overthrow of *Sodom* and *Gomorrha* is attested by * *Strabo*, † *Tacitus*, and || *Solinus*, to name no more.

* Ὥστε πιστεύειν τοῖς θρυλλουμένοις ὑπὸ τῶν ἐγχωρίων, ὡς ἄρα ᾠκοῦντο ποτὲ τρισκαίδεκα πόλεις ἐνταῦθα, ὧν τὴν μητροπόλεως Σοδόμων σώζοιτο κύκλος — ὑπὸ σεισμῶν τε καὶ ἀναφυσημάτων πυρὸς καὶ θερμῶν ὑδάτων ἀσφαλτωδῶν τε καὶ θειωδῶν, &c. l. 16.

† Haud procul inde campi, quos ferunt olim uberes, magnisque urbibus habitatos, fulminum jactu, arsisse, & manere vestigia, &c. *Histor. l.* 5.

|| Longo ab Hierosolymis recessu tristis sinus panditur, quem de cœlo tactum testatur humus nigra, & in cinerem soluta, duo ibi oppida Sodoma nominatum alterum, alterum Gomorrum, &c. *Polyhist. c* 48. *edit. Basil.* 1538.

And the learned Count *du Plessi*, collects from *Artabanus*, or *Artapanus* (as * *Clemens Alexandrinus* calls him) an account of a certain appearance to *Moses* † of Fire without

* Strom. l. 1.

† De veritat. Rel. Christ. c. 26.

out fewel to ſupport it, and that he alſo heard a voice informing him that he ſhould deliver the *Iſraelites* out of *Egypt*, and that afterwards he cauſed ſo great an Earthquake in *Egypt*, that King *Pharaoh* hereupon let them go; but afterwards purſuing them, (as ſome of the *Egyptian* Prieſts themſelves related) *Moſes* by God's direction touched the Sea with his Rod, and preſently its Waves ſtopped, and made a way for him and his whole People to paſs through; but that the *Egyptians* periſhed, part by the multitude of Thunderbolts that were diſcharged againſt them, and the reſt by the return of the Waters upon them. Which account varies ſo little from what the holy Scriptures teach concerning this whole affair, that none can doubt but it is a corruption of their truer and more compleat Relation. And this, ſaith he, * is teſtified alſo by *Demetrius* and *Eupolemus* amongſt the Greeks, with divers other circumſtances not mentioned here; as there are moreover in *Numenius*, the *Pythagorean*. So † *Menander* ſpake of the exceſſive drought in *Elijah*'s time. And ‖ *Julian* himſelf acknowledges that fire deſcended from Heaven in the time of *Moſes*, and again in this Prophet's days,

* Ibid.

† Μέμνηται δὲ τῆς ἀνομβρίας ταύτης καὶ Μένανδρος ἐν ταῖς Ἰθοβάλου τοῦ Τυρίων βασιλέως πράξεσι, &c. Joſep. Antiq. l. 8. c. 7.

‖ Ἅπαξ τοῦτο ἐπὶ Μωσέως ἐγένετο, καὶ ἐπὶ Ἠλίου τοῦ Θεσβίτου πάλιν, μετὰ πολλοὺς χρόνους. B. Cyril. c. Julian. l. 10.

days, to consume the Sacrifice upon the Altar. So that from this Specimen it appears, that these kind of relations are not wholly without the countenance of others besides Jewish and Christian Writers.

2. I come now in the next place to shew, that where Heathen Authors say nothing of them, a fair account may be given of this omission. For,

1. The *Jews* were but a single People, a Nation of no great extent, and which kept at a distance from all other Nations, and * was again despised by them. Which makes it no wonder if many things, very remarkable in themselves, and of a very extraordinary nature, were done amongst them, and either not known to the greatest part of the World, or not attended to by reason of the aversion the *Gentiles* had to this People. They that lived in *Greece*, or *Italy*, at *Athens*, or *Rome*, might have no account of many things that had passed in *Palæstine*; or if they heard of them, might not think it worth their while to certifie themselves of them, and commit them

* --Credat Judæus Apella. *Horat. l.* 1. *sat.* 5. Curtis Judæis. *Id. sat.* 9. Judæis quorum cophinus fœnumque supellex. *Juv. sat.* 3. Qualiacunque voles Judæi somnia vendunt. *sat.* 6. Quæsitum ad fontem solos deducere verpos. *Sat.* 14. Recutitaque Sabbata palles *Pers. sat.* 5. Φησὶν (ὁ Κέλσος) Ἰουδαίους ἀπὸ Αἰγύπτου δραπέτας γεγονέναι, μηδὲν πώποτε ἀξιόλογον πράξαντας, οὔτ' ἐν λόγῳ, οὔτ' ἐν ἔργῳ, οὔτ' ἐν ἀριθμῷ αὐτοὺς ποτε γεγενημένους. Orig. c. Cels. l. 4. p. 181.

them to writing, becauſe of the People amongſt whom they were done.

2. Beſides, if it be remembred that a long time ſince, there were but very rare, if any, footſteps of any credible Hiſtory, either amongſt the *Græcians* or *Romans*, concerning any Perſons that lived, or Actions that were done much before the * *Trojan* Wars, this is a ſufficient Anſwer to any pretence that can be drawn from the ſilence of Heathen Authors in relation to what paſſed in thoſe early times with which they were ſo little acquainted. Thoſe obſcure ænigmatical intimations of ſome of them, which occurr in ſome of their Poets and other Authors, are more than could neceſſarily have been required, conſidering the little notice they had of theſe things.

* Cur ſupra bellum Thebanum & funera Trojæ
Non alias alii quoque res cecinêre poetæ.
Lucret. l. 5.

3. And yet again had never ſuch care been taken to tranſmit the memory of theſe things, who knows not what multitudes of Authors have been wholly loſt, or preſerved only in ſome ſmall fragments, juſt enough to let us ſee that once there were ſuch Writers? And if this has been the fate of many that have wrote ſince our Saviour's time, it were eaſie to con-

conceive how divers good Hiſtories that had been compoſed many Ages before, might have periſhed long ere this and the memory of what was contained in them might have been paſt recovery.

And now if we put theſe things together, that divers of the Miracles recorded in the Old Teſtament are mentioned alſo in ſome ſort by Heathen Writers, that the *Jews* were a people of no great reputation amongſt the reſt of the World, and about whoſe affairs other Nations did not much concern themſelves, that we have a very imperfect account of any thing done in any part of the World in the times when theſe Miracles were wrought, except what remains in the Old Teſtament and the Jewiſh Hiſtorian *Joſephus*; and laſtly, that had more been written concerning them, there has ſince been time enough to have had it quite loſt, unleſs it met with a better fate than the Works of ſeveral later Authors. If we put theſe things together, I preſume I may look upon the Objection to be ſufficiently anſwered as far as it relates to the times of the Old Teſtament.

2. And as it reſpects the times of Chriſtianity, it is capable likewiſe of as fair a Solution; though theſe are the times againſt

gainſt which I believe it to be chiefly levelled, and that it ſtrikes eſpecially at the Miracles of our Saviour and his Apoſtles and other Diſciples which theſe forementioned conſiderations will ſtand in no ſtead, becauſe they are ſaid to have been of later date, and done in times of more knowledge and learning, and in many more parts of the World, and might therefore eaſily have had their memory ſecured in other Writers beſides thoſe we appeal to. " For who could think that ſo " many as wrote of thoſe times could all " conſpire to bury them in ſilence, if ever " they had been more than pretended? " Why for inſtance, ſhould not *Suetonius* " and *Tacitus*, who both mention our Sa- " viour Chriſt, (as has *already been ob- " ſerved,) why ſhould not theſe? why " ſhould not many others have given us " ſome account of them? Do they all " uſe to paſs over things of ſuch impor- " tance without any mention of them? " They were forward enough to tell of " Miracles ſaid to be done by " [1] *Veſpaſian*, [2] by *Caſtor* and " *Pollux*, [3] by *Attius Navius*, " [4] by *Apollonius Tyanæus*, by

* P. xxxv.

[1] Sueton. Veſpaſ. c. 7. & Tacit. hiſt. l. 4.

[2] Juſtin. hiſt. l. 20. L. Flor. l. 2. c. 12. & l. 3. c. 3. Valer. Max. l. 1. c. 8.

[3] Flor. l. 1. c. 5. Cic. de divinat. l. 1. c. 17. Aurel. Vict. in vitâ Tarquin. Priſc. Lactant. Inſt. l. 2. c. 7.

[4] Hierocl. fragm. Pythag. p. 264, 266. Philoſtrat. de Apoll. Ty. paſſim. Et Euſeb. c. Hierocl.

" *Pyrrhus*,

" [5] *Pyrrhus*, [6] by *Claudia*, [7] by *Pythagoras*, and [8] others; of miraculous appearances to [9] *Tiberius Attinius*, [10] to *Brutus*, to [11] *Curtius Rufus*, and [12] others; of miraculous Deliverances in [13] *Cilicia*, at [14] *Tarentum*, at [15] *Alexandria*, and [16] other places. How then come they to take no notice of those multitudes of Miracles we Christians boast so much of, if there were any certainty of them? How come these to be passed by more than the rest? Is not this a just ground of suspicion, that they were never done at all?

To this I answer in these following particulars.

1. It was by no means to be expected that the Enemies to Christianity should be ready to bear such ample, such undeniable Testimony to it, as a due acknowledgment of these Miracles must necessarily have been. When almost all Mankind seemed to have unanimously conspired to obstruct the propagation of our Religion, and as much as in them lay to explode

[5] Plutarch. in vit. Pyrrhi.
[6] Lactant. Instit. l. 2. c. 7. Herodian. l. 1. sect. 35.
[7] Porphyr. de vit. Pythag.
[8] Διατεθρύλλεται γοῦν αὐτοῖς μαντεῖαι καὶ χρησμοὶ, θεραπεῖαι καὶ ἀκέσεις παντοίων παθῶν, ἐπισκήψεις τε κατ' ἀσεβῶν. Euseb. Præp. Ev. l. 4 c. 1.
[9] Liv. hist. l. 2. c. 36.
[10] Plutarch. in Bruto.
[11] Tacit. Annal. 11.
[12] Valer. Max. l. 1. c. 8. Orig. c. Cels. l. 5.
[13] Zosim. l. 1.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Diog. Laert. l. 5. in vit. Demetr. Phal.
[16] Jamb. de myster. sect. 3. c. 4. Cic. de divinat. l. 1. c. 26. Val. Max. l. 1. c. 7. Van Dalen de orac. p. 100. Lactant. l. 2. c. 8.

explode it out of the World, both *Jews* and *Gentiles* exerting their utmoſt force to this purpoſe, who could think that their Writers would make it their buſineſs, to plead for it, and confirm and eſtabliſh it, by acquainting all generations what amazing teſtimony was born to it, above any other Doctrine that ever was in the World; what mighty ſigns and wonders were wrought for its vindication? This were to contradict themſelves, to build what at the ſame time they were earneſtly endeavouring to pull down, and in effect to defeat all the moſt violent attempts of their enraged Governours for its extirpation. And nothing but the want of a better argument could tempt Men to urge their ſilence in this caſe as a juſt confutation of theſe Miracles, conſidering the prejudice Mankind were generally under, againſt the Religion theſe were wrought in favour of, and the imminent danger that might have enſued upon their publication of them.

2. It was enough that theſe things were conſtantly atteſted by the Chriſtians, and in the publickeſt manner that might be, and appealed to as a very ſignal evidence of the truth of our Religion, and of the errour and wickedneſs of all that

that ſet themſelves to oppoſe it, and yet could not be denied by *Celſus*, or *Hierocles*, or *Porphyry*, or *Lucian*, or any of their moſt avowed Adverſaries, though theſe we may be ſure would by no means have omitted ſo fair an opportunity of expoſing the Chriſtian Apologiſts and other Writers, if they had known how to do it. Had not what was urged of this kind been too evident to be contradicted, they muſt have looked to have heard of it with both Ears. They had to deal with Men, who would willingly have been at the pains of detecting their forgery, if they had ſuſpected them to have been guilty of any, and would not have forborn to divulge it with all the freedom that might be, and all the moſt heinous aggravations it had been capable of. And their Silence in this reſpect is therefore a much more convincing proof of the truth and reality of the Chriſtians Pretenſions, than it was againſt them in the other. The ſame motives that with-held any from publiſhing thoſe Miracles they knew to be true, would no leſs have prevailed with them on the other hand to make the World ring of it, if they had been falſe. And that notwithſtanding all their prejudices againſt Chriſtianity, and averſion to it, they ſhould patiently hear its Champions

pions appealing upon all occaſions to the teſtimony of Miracles, as well as to the other Arguments that tended to recommend and propagate their Religion, and not have the confidence to contradict it, is a plain intimation of their aſſurance of the truth of it, and as great an evidence in its behalf as could be expected from perſons in their circumſtances. And this makes it very unreaſonable to call this ſort of Teſtimony into queſtion, only becauſe of the ſilence of its enemies, which to any conſidering perſon muſt needs appear to make much more ſtrongly for, than it doth againſt it.

3. Their ſetting up * *Apollonius Tyanenſis* and others, to ape our Saviour's and his Diſciples Miracles, was proof enough that they did believe our Saviour and his Diſciples to have in truth wrought thoſe Miracles they ſet themſelves thus to confront. And the reaſon is plain and obvious; becauſe if they had not been ſatisfied of the certainty hereof, their proper method of treating with the Chriſtians had been, to put them immediately upon the proof of the facts they appealed to, and not to have taken it for granted that

* Cum facta ejus mirabilia deſtrueret, nec tamen negaret, voluit oſtendere Apollonium vel paria, vel etiam majora feciſſe. Mirum quod Apuleium prætermiſit; cujus ſolent & multa & mira memorari. *Lactant. Inſtit. div. l.* 5. *c.* 3. πόσους δὲ ἄλλους τοιούτους πεπιστεύκασι; Celſus apud Orig. l. 2. p. 93.

that these things were done, and only sought to lessen their authority by pleading that the Christians were not the only persons in the World that had done Miracles, but that there were Magicians amongst themselves, who had done others as considerable for both number and quality as any they could pretend to. * *Hierocles* makes no question whether our Saviour did many Miracles, but only urges that *Apollonius* equalled or rather excelled him herein. And † *Celsus* only pleads that what Miracles our Saviour did, he did by *Egyptian* Magick; that ‖ our own Scriptures speak of wicked Men and impostours who should come with these or the like feats, and that Satan himself should be the author of them; and again, * that *Zamolxis* amongst the *Scythians*, and *Pythagoras* in *Italy*, *Rampsinitus* in *Egypt*, and *Orpheus* amongst the *Odrysæ*, *Protesilaus* in *Thessaly*, and *Hercules* and *Theseus* in *Tenarus* had done very strange things as well as *Christ*; with more † to the same purpose. I grant that he ‖ questions whether our Saviour rose again from the dead, as is recorded

* Ἄνω καὶ κάτω θρυλλοῦσι σεμνύνοντες Ἰησοῦν, ὡς τυφλοῖς ἀναβλέψαι τε παρασχόντα, καὶ τινα τοαῦτα δράσαντα θαυμάσια ἡμεῖς μὲν τὸν τοαῦτα πεποιηκότα [Ἀπολλώνιον] οὐ θεὸν ἡγούμεθα. Fragm. Pythag. vid. & Euseb. c. Hierocl.

† Ἅτινα διαβάλλων Κέλσος, φησὶν αὐτὸν παρ' Αἰγυπτίοις μεμαθηκότα, πεποιηκέναι. Orig. c. Cels. l. 1. p. 34. Κἀκεῖ δυνάμεων τινῶν πειρασθεὶς, ἐφ' αἷς Αἰγύπτιοι σεμνύνονται, ἐπανῆλθεν, ἐν ταῖς δυνάμεσι μέγα φρονῶν, καὶ δι' αὐτὰς θεὸν αὐτὸν ἀνηγόρευσε. l. 1. p. 22.

‖ P. 89.

* P. 94.

† L. 1. p. 52, 53.

‖ L. 2. p. 94.

recorded of him, becauſe he conceives, that none ever did, or could do it; but as to his other Miracles, he ſeems to make no doubt of them. Which was a very ſuperfluous ſort of Argumentation if he did any way disbelieve them, and might much better have been avoided, by coming only to this ſhort iſſue, whether ever they were done or not. And ſince he declined this courſe, it may very fairly be concluded, that he had a good reaſon for doing it; that is, that he was ſufficiently ſatisfied of the matter of fact, as to the generality of our Saviour's Miracles, and had nothing at all to object againſt them.

4. And laſtly, They that pretend to disbelieve theſe Miracles, argue at a very ſtrange rate, whilſt they diſown them, and yet daily ſee the prevalence of that moſt holy Religion, which they were deſigned to propagate; and for which to have prevailed as it did, againſt the luſts and temporal intereſts of Mankind, without the aſſiſtance of any Miracles, had been perhaps no leſs a Miracle than any of thoſe I am treating of.

Had Chriſtianity been adapted to the corrupt inclinations of Men, or though

unagreeable to theſe, had it been promoted, as *Mahometaniſm* was, by the power of the Sword, no wonder if it had gained Proſelytes without any farther aſſiſtance. But when the caſe was juſt contrary to this; when our Saviour's Doctrine aimed directly at curbing and reſtraining the vices of its Profeſſors, indiſpenſably obliging them to an exact uprightneſs of converſation, to bring down the high looks of the proud, to allay the impetuous exceſſes of the paſſionate, to ſubdue the ungovernable appetites of the luſtfull and laſcivious, to cure the continual cravings of the covetous, to ſtop the fury of the malicious and revengefull, and in all reſpects to make Men holy and heavenly-minded here, and prepare them for a better ſtate hereafter; and when moreover all the force and power of the World was againſt it, endeavouring its utter ſubverſion, not its propagation; when the bleſſed Author of this Doctrine had been deſpiſed, calumniated, derided, and at laſt put to death upon the Croſs under the notion of a Malefactor, and its Profeſſors were to encounter the greateſt difficulties, to ſtruggle with Men and Devils, with their own ſinfull inclinations, and with all the outward

ward oppoſition that could be made againſt them, ſo that they had trouble enough to expect in this life, but no viſible reward before another; when Chriſtianity, I ſay, had theſe almoſt inſuperable diſcouragements to grapple with, it had need of the cleareſt proof that might be, and in particular of good ſtore of Miracles to evince it to have come from God. And its moſt inveterate and moſt prejudiced Enemies would be hard put to it, to give any tolerable account, * how under theſe formidable diſadvantages it ſhould have conquered ſo great a part of the World without them. Inſomuch that had we no other proof of them, but only that our Religion is thus wonderfully ſpread over the face of the Earth, (as we have abundance) this one obſervation would plead hard for the belief of ſome Miracles at firſt, as its Credentials, though we at this diſtance knew not of what ſort they were. But when we not only ſee this ſurprizing effect, but have a full and particular account of theſe Miracles too, from thoſe that were beſt acquainted with them, and beſt qualified to tranſmit them to

* Ὀυκ ἂν γὰρ γωρὶς δυνάμεων καὶ παραδόξων ἐκίνουν τοὺς καινῶν λόγων καὶ καινῶν μαθημάτων ἀκούοντας, πρὸς τὸ καταλιπεῖν μὲν τὰ πάτρια, παραδέξασθαι δὲ μετὰ κινδύνων τῶν μέχρι θανάτου τὰ τούτων μαθήματα. Orig. c. Celſ. l. 1.

poſterity, it is monſtrouſly unreaſonable ſtill to doubt of them, only becauſe of the ſilence of ſome others, whoſe intereſt it was to ſtifle them all they could.

And thus I perſwade my ſelf I have ſufficiently eſtabliſhed the certainty of an over-ruling Providence, which cannot be queſtioned without queſtioning at the ſame time, all thoſe numerous Prophecies, whoſe accompliſhments long after (and yet juſt as had been foretold) have ſhewn them to have proceeded from the Spirit of God, and all thoſe ſeveral ſorts of Miracles which we are ſufficiently aſſured were wrought, and yet could not be wrought but by the finger of God; and which moreover follows neceſſarily from the nature of the divine Attributes, and is farther manifeſted from the Creation of the World, and from its Preſervation in Being, and eſpecially in that admirable Order and Harmony, which ſo loudly proclaims its Maker's Glory. Theſe Conſiderations Reaſon, unaſſiſted by ſupernatural Revelation, ſuggeſts in behalf of a ſuper-intending Divine Providence, and conſequently in order to a ſteady Dependance upon it in all our Exigencies. And ſince they were like to grow

grow to this length, I hope the Reader will think it excuſable that I did not inſert them in the body of the following Diſcourſe, and yet conſidering that good uſe may be made of them, that he will not blame me for having been prevailed with to add them here.

ERRATA.

ERRATA.

PAge xlij. l. 29. r. rather than. p. lv. l. 2. for *if* r. of. p. 4. l. 22. r. Epithete. p. 35. l. 31. r. μὴ. p. 40. l. 11. for *recommended* r. recorded. p. 42. l. 31. for *diſcretion* r. direction. p. 48. l. 11. after *that* r. admiration of the. p. 49. l. 8. r. Neſts. p. 63. l. 12. for *ſo* r. to. p. 70. l. 16. r. Who. l. 17. r. met. p. 123. l. 18. r. *Trebonius*. p. 163. l. 11. r. *Corpſes*. p. 173. l. 9. for *of* r. in. p. 175. l. 29. r. to no more purpoſe. p. 201. l. 33. r. he cried out.

In the *Margin* read,

P. xlij. l. 2. Βάρβαρο. p. 4. l. 5. quidam. p. 29. l. 2. αὐτοῖς. p. 59. l. 8. quia ſi. l. 32. adhibetur. p. 60. l. 21. ἀρραβῶνας. p. 62. l. 8. Οὐκ ἔστι βίον νύμτε ἄλυπον. p. 80. l. penult. βασάνοις. p. 81. Διωρύμασιν. p. 108. l. 12. Apul. p. 152. l. 2. ἱδρυσίμοις. p. 163. l. 12. Herodot. in Euterp. p. 168. l. 22. quadam.

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OF TRUST in GOD.

THE INTRODUCTION.

SO numerous, and so pressing are the Troubles that continually attend Mankind, so many the Losses and Misfortunes to which the Richest, so many the Crosses and Vexations to which the Greatest, so many the unhappy Disappointments to which the Wisest are liable; and yet so much more pungent are the Sorrows and the Wants whereto the generality of Men, but especially the meaner sort, are expos'd; as may well put each one upon a serious Enquiry after the best Method of arming himself against them. This all are sufficiently sensible of, howsoever they are too frequently mistaken in the Means they choose to make use of in order to their welfare.

The common Practice is, to try what may be done by the assistance of Power, Wealth, Friends, or other the like helps, in hope that these may be able to render the Owners Lives comfortable and easie. And yet it is observable, that when Men have diligently laboured after these Advantages all their days, they are but few who attain to any considerable share of them; and again, that when obtained, and in the greatest plenty, they are still but a very feeble Guard against divers of those Evils to which we are all obnoxious. They can neither preserve from bodily Pains and Diseases, nor compose a distracted Mind, nor recover a lost Member, nor prolong a decaying Life, nor any other way make those happy who have nothing better to depend upon. If wisely managed they may tend much to the Owner's benefit, both here and hereafter; and are therefore to be thankfully received, and carefully improved to the Glory of God, the Giver of them.

But yet they fall so far short of what Men are apt to promise themselves from them, that some who seem to have seriously considered their Insufficiency, have professed themselves * weary of a Life, whose Inconveniencies they have found all these unable to remedy.

* Quod siquis Deus mihi largiatur, ut ex hac ætate repuerascerem, & in cunis vagiam, valdè recusem; nec vero velim, quasi decurso spatio, à calce ad carceres revocari. *Cic. de Senectute.*

Ex quo intelligi licet, non nasci longè optimum esse, nec in hos scopulos incidere vitæ: proximum autem si natus sis, quamprimum mori, & tanquam ex incendio effugere fortunæ. *Cic. de Consolat.*

Ita primum bonum esse non nasci, secundum citius mori, &c. *Lactant. Instit. l. 3. c. 19.*

Ἦν ἄρα τοῖν δὲ δυοῖν ἑνὸς αἵρεσις, ἢ τὸ γενέσθαι
Μηδέποτ', ἢ θανεῖν αὐτίκα πιπτόμενον. Posidipp.

Others

Others have from time to time been wrought upon by the variety of Troubles they have met with, * to become their own Executioners, rather than continue to labour under the weight of those Grievances they thought themselves no longer able to bear. As the Histories of all Ages, and our own Experience too sadly inform us.

* Οἱ δ' ἀγχόνην ἑαυτοῖς συνήψαν διὰ κακοπάθειαν ἀνυπόστατον λειτουργίαν ἢ λύπην φέρουσαν. Stob. Serm. 96.

Others have sought to help themselves by endeavouring after a certain † Indolency, under all Occurrences, as if the uneasiness we find under the worst of them proceeded only from our own Phancy, not from any real impressions that they make upon us.

† Τὰς ἀνθρώπους, οὐ τὰ πράγματα, ἀλλὰ τὰ περὶ τῶν πραγμάτων δόγματα. Epictet. Enchir. c. 10.

Τοιαῦτα καὶ τὰ τῶν Πλατωνικῶν ἐν Πολιτείᾳ· καὶ ταραβῶται ὁ Ἀλκιβιάδης, καὶ ἐξορύττεται τὸ ὀφθαλμῶ, ὅτι εὐδαίμων ἔσται. Clem. Alex. Strom. l. 4.

Noster sapiens vincit quidem incommodum omne, sed sentit: illorum ne sentit quidem. *Senec. Epist.* 9.

Dixerit hoc quidem Epicurus, semper beatum esse sapientem.—Quem quidem cum summis doloribus conficiatur, ait dicturum quam suave est, quam nihil curo? *Cic. de fin. Bon. & Mal. l.* 5. 27. *& Tusc. Quæst. l.* 2. *c.* 7.

Others, again, have laboured to support themselves with other more generous Meditations, comforting themselves to think, ‖ that their Afflictions, if sharp, cannot last long; * that whilst they do last, a patient compliance with them is the most advantageous way of bearing.

‖ Tertul. Apol. c. 45. Diog. Laert. in vita Epicuri. Cic. de finibus, l. 1. & 2. Anton. Imp. εἰς ἑαυτὸν, l. 7. Sect. 23. & 38. Senec. Epist. 24, & 78.

* Unum est levamentum malorum ingentium, pati, & necessitatibus suis obsequi. *Senec. de Irâ, l.* 3. *c.* 16. Leve fit quod bene fertur onus. *Ovid.* Ita est vita hominum quasi cum ludas tesseris, si illud quod maximè opus est jactu non cadit, illud quod cecidit forte, id arte ut corrigas. *Ter. Adelph.*

† Quàm multos militiæ morbus eripuit? quosdam ne ad ruinam domus ſuæ occurrerent, inimicus vadimonio tenuit; ne in piratarum manus pervenirent, quidem naufragio conſecuti ſunt. *Senec. de beneficiis, l. 6. c. 9.*

ing them; † that great Benefits many times redound from them; ‖ and that Death at laſt will put an end to all our Troubles.

‖ A malis igitur mors abducit. *Cic. Tuſc. Quæſt. l. 1.* Vitæ miſeræ mors finis eſſe videtur. *ibid. c. 42.*

At other times they argued from the commonneſs of Afflictions; that themſelves were not the only Sufferers, * what they endured being no more than the uſual fate of Mankind.

* Næ illa quidem conſolatio firmiſſima eſt, quanquam & uſitata eſt, & ſæpe prodeſt: Non tibi hoc ſoli. *Tuſc. Quæſt. l. 3.*

And ſometimes, again, to induce their Followers to ſubmit the more chearfully to Afflictions, they have attempted to ſatisfie them with this Diſtinction, † That though they could not but acknowledge their Sufferings to be *ſharp, troubleſome, hateful, againſt Nature, and difficult to be born*, yet they would not allow them to be *Evils*; as if the bare change of an Epithite had been a Cure for the worſt of them, for the acuteſt Pain, or heavieſt Sorrow. Which Notion *Dionyſius Heracleotes* acknowledged ‖ to be ſufficiently confuted by a violent pain in his Eyes, and a ſevere fit of the Stone.

† Doceat paratiorem me ad contemnendam pecuniam fore, ſi illam in rebus præpoſitis, quàm ſi in bonis duxero; fortioremq; in patiendo dolore, ſi eum aſperum, & difficilem perpeſſu, & contra naturam, quam ſi malum eſſe dixero. *De finibus bon. & mal. l. 4.* Aſperum, difficile, odioſum, contra naturam dicunt, nec tamen malum. *Tuſc. Quæſt. l. 2. c. 7.* Nihil agis dolor, quamvis ſis moleſtus nunquam te eſſe confitebor malum. *ibid. c. 25.*

‖ De fin. bon. & mal. l. 5. c. 31. Tuſc. Quæſt. l. 2. c. 24. & Diog. Laert. l. 7. in vitâ D. Heracl.

But

But our Religion preſcribes a far better Remedy for all theſe Diſtempers, than is any where elſe to be met with; namely, that in all our Exigences we look up to Almighty God, and *caſt our Care upon him*, who not only is beſt able to relieve us under whatſoever Calamities, but hath moreover directed us to ſeek to him for what things we ſtand in need of, with a Promiſe that he will be wanting to none that duly apply themſelves to him, requiring us neither to ſuffer our ſelves to be overwhelmed with any ſort of Grief, upon whatever account, nor to expect Relief againſt it from any other Hand than his, who alone is the proper Refuge for the Diſtreſſed. To Him we are to preſent our Caſe and make known our Sorrows, and then to rely upon Him, as the ſureſt Help in all our Needs, and the beſt Support under all our Troubles. This he hath been graciouſly pleaſed to appoint, as the readieſt, and in truth, the only certain way to obtain either Comfort under, or Defence againſt, or Deliverance from Wants, Diſeaſes, Loſſes, Fears, Dangers, or whatſoever Afflictions. This Duty, therefore, I have undertaken to recommend to each one's ſerious and conſtant Practice. And that I may do it the more effectually, I ſhall proceed to diſcourſe of it in this following Method.

1. To conſider the Nature and Importance of the Duty.

2. To obſerve our indiſpenſible Obligation in the performance of it.

3. To inforce the Practice of it from the Aſſurance we have of God's continual Care over us.

4. To instance in some of the great Advantages, which would accrue to us from a faithful and constant Dependance upon God.

5. And lastly, To evince the Insufficiency of all other Means for either securing us from, or supporting us under Afflictions.

CHAP.

CHAP. I.

The Duty of Caſting our Care upon God.

I Begin with the firſt of theſe Heads, *To conſider the Nature of this Duty, of putting our Truſt in God, and caſting our Care upon him.* Now, Truſt, or Affiance in, or Dependance upon another, * *Tho. Aquinas* rightly declares *to ſignifie principally, that hope of benefit in any reſpect, which a Man conceives from the Promiſes of ſuch an one*; but withall, *that it may be grounded upon any other reaſonable Conſideration.* And upon both theſe Accounts there is great cauſe to rely upon Almighty God, as not only beſt able to aſſiſt us, but farther, as having frequently both by Word and Deed ſhewn his readineſs to do it. And accordingly he expects from each one of us, that in all our ſtreights we make him our ſtay and our ſtrength, looking paſt the immediate cauſe of our Fears or Sufferings, Dangers or Neceſſities, to that ſupream mighty Hand of his which governs and diſpoſes all things, and endeavouring to work in our ſelves ſuch a ſenſe of his marvellous Loving-kindneſs to all who duely truſt in him; that whatever our Circumſtances be as to this Life,

* Principaliter ſignificare videtur, quòd aliquis ſpem concipiat, ex hoc quod credit verbis alicujus auxilium promittentis — Fiducia etiam poteſt dici, quâ aliquis ſpem alicujus rei concipit ex aliquo conſiderato. 2. *Secundæ Quæ.* 129. 6.

we may yet be able to comfort our ſelves in him *whoſe Mercies are over all his Works*, not doubting of his Protection, whenſoever we heartily ſue to him for it. But then, to the end that this our Dependance upon him be not vain and groundleſs, but well fix'd and ſettl'd, and which may certainly anſwer our Expectation, theſe following Particulars are to be remembred.

SECT. I.

I. *WE are not ſo to interpret any of God's Promiſes, as if he had obliged himſelf thereby to fulfill all our extravagant and unreaſonable deſires.* It is a common thing for Men to exceed the meaſure of God's Promiſes, in relation to the Benefits they expect from him; not becauſe he doth not promiſe what is ſufficient for each one of us, but becauſe they are apt to deſire more than is enough: Either they aim at great Matters which are too high for them, or at leaſt, are diſſatisfy'd if they meet not with all that they apprehend ſuitable to their Circumſtances; and when any Afflictions befall them, they are tempted too often to conclude, That their Heavenly Father neglects them, if he do not think fit preſently to ſet them at eaſe. And whilſt they take upon them thus inconſiderately to carve for themſelves, no wonder if they find thoſe Hopes defeated, which are not built upon the Divine Promiſes, but upon their own covetous or ambitious Deſires, or proceed from their unfitneſs to bear any kind of Trouble.

1. Where-

1. Wherefore the first Expedient in order to a right performance of this Duty is, * *To confine our Desires within their proper bounds, not aiming at things above our reach, and which every one sees we have no reason to expect.* Our God is infinitely merciful, and gracious, and willing to *take care of those that* faithfully *cast their care upon him*; but he has never engaged to give every one his fill of Wealth and Honour, nor of Power and Authority. Nor indeed is it consistent with the state of the World that he should do it, since † the lower and poorer sort are apparently as necessary for performing the meaner Offices, as the higher are for Empire and Dominion. A plentiful Fortune, a splendid Equipage, a richly furnished Habitation, abounding with all sorts of pleasant Entertainments, an eminent State, and a great Command, and other the like Advantages, are the Gifts of God, and to be thankfully received whensoever he is pleased to send them, but they are no part of his Promises, they are not what he hath undertaken to provide for all that put their trust in him, nor are to be reckoned upon as such. The Husbandman may hope for a plentiful Harvest, the Mariner for a safe and profitable Voyage, the Artificer for a comfortable subsistence by his Industry; but not for the highest Titles of Honour, not for the Government of a mighty and victorious Army, not for a Crown or a Kingdom. As we have not all descended from Princes and Nobles, so neither is it to be imagined, that all can live in Courts and stately Palaces, and enjoy the same Privileges with

* Sis vis Pothydeam divitem facere, non pecuniæ adjiciendum est, sed cupiditatibus detrahendum. *Senec. Epist.* 21.

† Οἱ μεγάλοι δίχα τῶν μικρῶν ὐ δύνανται εἶναι, ὐδὲ οἱ μικροὶ δίχα τῶν μεγάλων, σύγκρασίς τίς ἐστιν ἐν πᾶσιν ἐφ' ὠφελείᾳ. Clem. Rom. Ep. 1. p. 49.

with them that have. And if all will be eagerly ſeeking after thoſe peculiar Advantages, which they know before-hand very few can attain to, it will be a juſt Reflection upon their own Prudence, but cannot poſſibly argue any neglect in Almighty God, that the greateſt part of them are ſure to meet with a diſappointment.

2. *Neither are we to imagine the Divine Providence any way defective, though even in our lower Stations we have not all things correſpondent to our Deſires.* Becauſe it is very poſſible that our Deſires may be inordinate, and which we ought rather to moderate, than expect that God ſhould hearken to them, as they are. We are generally inclinable to be very partial in our own Caſe; and * were we at liberty to chooſe for our ſelves, we ſhould never know when to be ſatisfy'd. And it is therefore a great kindneſs to us, that we have one to chooſe for us, who perfectly underſtands our condition, who obſerves all our wants, and ſees before-hand what kind of Proviſion is moſt ſuitable for us; and who moreover has promiſed, that if we *ſeek firſt the Kingdom of God and his Righteouſneſs*; if we make it our buſineſs to pleaſe him, and then faithfully *caſt our care upon him*, he will not fail to beſtow upon us, whatſoever good things ſhall be neceſſary for us. They are our B. Saviour's own words, and therefore can never poſſibly deceive us; † *Seek ye firſt the Kingdom of God*, ſaith our Saviour, *and his Righteouſneſs, and all theſe things ſhall be added unto you.*

* Cyrum & Cambyſem, & totum regni Perſici ſtemma percenſe: quem invenies, cui modum imperii ſatietas fecerit? qui non vitam in aliquâ ulteriùs procedendi cogitatione finierit? *Senec. de benef. l. 7. c. 3.*

† St. Matt. 6. 33.

And whilſt we can be ſure of thus much, we muſt blame our ſelves only, if we be unhappy for

for lack of what is not really needful for us, and what we should not at all want, were it not for our own Imprudence. * *A man's life consists not in the abundance of the things that he possesseth*; nor its welfare in pleasing Entertainments of all kinds, but † *having food and raiment*, we may very well *be content therewith*, though the one be not so delicious, nor the other so gay as our vain Fancies might tempt us to wish for. Nor are we to extend God's Promises of providing for us any farther than this comes to. As he is the sole Proprietor of all, he may give us, if he pleaseth, not the Necessaries only, but together with them the Superfluities of this Life; but seeing he has no where obliged himself to it, it must be a gross mistake to make our own Desires the Standard of our Fortunes, rather than his Divine Will, and that infinite Wisdom whereby he knows what is best for us, and what a series of Mischiefs our own choice of greater Wealth or Honour would expose us to, if not prevented by his Almighty Hand.

* S. Lu. 12. 15.

* 1 Tim. 6. 8. Ὁ αὐτὸς [Ἐπίκουρος] ἔλεγεν ἑτοίμως ἔχειν καὶ τῷ Διῒ περὶ εὐδαιμονίας διαγωνίζεσθαι, μάζαν ἔχων καὶ ὕδωρ· *Ælian. var. Hist. l. 4. c. 13.* Panem & aquam natura desiderat, nemo ad hæc pauper, intra quæ quisquis desiderium suum claudit, cum ipso Jove de fœlicitate contendat, ut ait Epicurus. *Senec. Epist. 25.* Τὸ ὀλιγοδεὲς τῆς φύσεως ἀφηγούμενοι, καὶ τὸ ἐκ τῶν λιτῶν καὶ εὐπορίστων ἱκανῶς αὐτῆς τὸ ἀναγκαῖον ἰώμενον πρεσβεύοντες. Porphyr. de abstin. l. 1. Sect. 48. Ἐλαχίστων δεόμενος ἔγγιστα ὄστι θεῶν; ait Socrates, Diog. Laert. l. 2.

3. *When we groan under the weight of any affliction, we are not to promise our selves, that God will observe our time for the removal of it.* ‖ He may suffer Persons to be in want, or disgrace, or pain, or sickness, or trouble of Mind, or whatsoever Calamity; and though they cry never so importunately to him for help, may deferr their Deliverance, and they

‖ Aliquando desideratur ab illo, & non dat, novit horam dandi qui curat. *D. August. in Ps. 144. 16.*

they in the mean time have no cauſe to complain
* Gen. 15. 16. of him. As when he promiſed to * *Abraham*, that the Land of *Canaan* ſhould be given to his Poſterity to inherit, he yet determined to delay the completion of this his Promiſe for above *four hundred years, till the iniquity of the Amorites was full*; ſo may he with no leſs reaſon, on the other hand, forbear to deliver his faithful Servants out of trouble, untill he ſees them fitted for a Deliverance. It is ſufficient that he
† Iſa. 49. 8. will be ready to † *hear us in an acceptable time*, vouchſafing us his help when he knows it moſt expedient for us. And we muſt be very undutiful and very ungrateful to him, if we do not both patiently wait his time for a Deliverance, and thankfully receive it whenſoever it comes.

To conclude, All our Dependance being upon God alone, and all our Expectations being from the benigne influence of his good Providence inceſſantly watching over us, whether to ſave us from evil, or to beſtow his Bleſſings upon us, nothing can be more unreaſonable than not to reſign our ſelves perfectly to his diſpoſal, to receive whatſoever favours from him, and whenſoever
‖ Iniquus eſt, qui muneris ſui arbitrium danti non relinquit. *Senec. de conſol. c. 29.* he pleaſes. ‖ It is too much Preſumption for poor ignorant Creatures to preſcribe to the Almighty, at what time, and in what meaſure he ſhould diſpenſe his Benefits. And if any have the Vanity to attempt it, they cannot ſo properly be ſaid to *caſt their Care upon God* herein, as to ſeek how they may impoſe upon themſelves, and provide that they may certainly be diſappointed of their hope. So that as we would ſtudy either to pleaſe God, or to ſucceed in our Dependance upon him, it will concern us in the firſt place, to ſee that our Deſires be regular and reaſonable,

ſonable, before we venture to make our Application to him, but eſpecially before we promiſe our ſelves that he will vouchſafe to anſwer us.

SECT. II.

II. BE *our Deſires never ſo reaſonable, yet are we not to look that they ſhould ordinarily be granted us, without our own earneſt endeavours for obtaining them.* We muſt not wait for God to bring up * Quails wherewith to feed us, as he did the *Iſraelites* in the Wilderneſs, or to rain down Manna from Heaven, to maintain us in Idleneſs; but muſt be ready at all times to do what in us lies for our own relief, and then referr our ſelves to him for the Succeſs. † *Hierocles* in his Comment upon the golden Verſes, blames thoſe that ſought to God for the things themſelves labour'd not after, and gives this juſt Reaſon of his Reproof, Τὸ ἀργὸν ἐκλύσει τῆς εὐχῆς τὸ δραστήριον, their Sloth would hinder their Deſign; and were their Prayers never ſo earneſt, yet ſeeing they acted not ſuitably in other reſpects, theſe would not prevail. And accordingly ‖ St. *Chryſoſtom* obſerves of our Bleſſed Lord, That *he forbids not to caſt our Seed into the Ground, but only cautions againſt an anxious ſolicitude about its increaſe; as neither doth he encourage to leave off all Labour, but only requires not to be too intent upon, nor too nearly concern'd for the things we labour after.* He doth not ſimply condemn all Care of things Temporal, but ſo far only as it is an hindrance to our Care and Watchfulneſs for trying and taſting the Goodneſs of God, or as it weakens

* Num. 11. 31.

† P. 133, 134.

‖ Οὐκ εἶπεν ὅτι σπείρειν οὐ δεῖ, ἀλλ' ὅτι μεριμνᾶν οὐ δεῖ· οὐδ' ὅτι ἐργάζεσθαι οὐ χρὴ, ἀλλ' ὅτι μὴ μικρόψυχον εἶναι, καὶ κατατείνειν ἑαυτὸν τῆς φροντίσιν οὐ χρὴ. *In S. Matt. Hom. 22.*

weakens our reliance upon his fatherly Kindness and Protection. And in truth, to cry to God for help, and yet be unwilling to help our selves, is not to trust his Providence, but to tempt him, and savours more of Presumption than of Piety; and hence gives him just cause to leave us to our selves, without granting the Assistance we thus feebly seek at his Hands, and yet without which we must necessarily be but in a forlorn condition.

Whence it follows, that if we would take the right way to Safety and Happiness, we must not think much to bestir our selves, but must up and be doing; must consider what is incumbent upon our selves, as well as what Encouragement we have to depend upon a good God for Relief, and must behave our selves accordingly. And particularly, we must be careful,

1. To use all proper means for obtaining our Desires.

2. To add to our own Endeavours, our hearty Prayers to Almighty God for his Blessing upon them.

3. To avoid whatsoever tends to frustrate these our Endeavours and Prayers.

1. *We are to use all proper Means for obtaining our Desires.* * As we are not to put our selves out of God's Protection, so neither are we to be wholly out of our own, but are in subordination to his good Providence, to take care of our selves, according to our Abilities and Opportunities of doing it. For though God be ready of his abundant Goodness, to assist our weak Endeavours, yet can we not promise our selves that he will work Deliverances for us without them.

* Οὔτε εὐχῇ δεῖ θαῤῥεῖν ἀμελοῦντας τῷ καθ' ἑαυτούς, οὔτε σπουδάζοντας τῇ οἰκείᾳ μόνον πιστεύειν σπουδῇ, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὴν ἄνωθεν ἐπιζητεῖν βοήθειαν, καὶ τὰ παρ' ἑαυτῶν συνεισφέρειν. D. Chrysost. in S. Matt. Hom 23.

them. As he will not give the Husbandman his wonted Crop without Tilling and Sowing; ſo it is but vain to imagine that he will make others Learned without Study, or thriving in the World without Diligence, or ſafe without a watchful regard to themſelves and their Concerns; that he will ſet ſuch above the Attempts of a formidable Enemy, who willingly deliver themſelves into his Hands, or at leaſt, do not reſolutely withſtand him; will keep their Houſes from being burned, who ſtand by idly, beholding their Flames, without ever ſtriving to get them quench'd; will reſcue thoſe from imminent dangers who do not ſo much as ſeek to ſhelter themſelves againſt them, or bring thoſe from under heavy Preſſures and Calamities, who lie ſtill and cry to him for help, but will not be at the pains of trying what themſelves can do towards the removal of them. It is true, he hath many times been pleaſed to work even Miracles for the Deliverance of them that have faithfully put their Truſt in him; but it is too much to conceit, that he will ordinarily do this, and eſpecially, that he will do it for any who will not be perſuaded to help themſelves. No, whoſoever would hope to enjoy his Bleſſing and the Benefits of his Protection, muſt be ready to do his own part for obtaining them, taking what care he can fairly and honeſtly of himſelf, before he preſumes to reſt upon God for what he cannot.

2. *We are to add to our own Endeavours our hearty Prayers to Almighty God for his Bleſſing upon them,* without which they will all certainly prove ineffectual. When we have done all we can, have uſed our utmoſt cunning in contriving

and

and our greateſt diligence in carrying on our Deſigns, and though in humane probability we have never ſo fair a proſpect of Succeſs, yet muſt not our dependance be upon any thing of this nature, but upon Him who is *the Rock of Ages, and a never-failing Strength.* We muſt beware that we * Hab. 1. 16. do not ruine our ſelves by * *Sacrificing to our own Net, and burning Incenſe to our Drag*, as the Prophet expreſſeth it, thereby provoking Almighty God to ſet himſelf againſt us, to ſtrand us in the very Port, to deliver us up when we think our ſelves already Victors, or to caſt us headlong when we are almoſt at the top of our Deſires. † We muſt by no means ſuffer any reliance upon our own Power, or Skill, or Induſtry to make us regardleſs of God's good Providence, but muſt look for a happy iſſue of all our moſt vigorous Endeavours from his Bleſſing alone. Thus much the holy *Pſalmiſt* informs us, *Pſal.* 127. 1, 2, 3. *Except the Lord build the Houſe they labour in vain that build it; except the Lord keep the City, the Watchman waketh but in vain.* It is but loſt labour, *it is but vain for you to riſe up early, and ſit up late, and eat the Bread of Sorrows.* It is to no purpoſe to promiſe our ſelves Succeſs in any of our Undertakings, whether for preſerving us from Evil, or for procuring good Things, any farther than he is pleaſed to grant us his Aſſiſtance. It is he that giveth power *to get Wealth*, that advanceth to *Honour*, that lengtheneth out our *Days*, that *delivereth out of Troubles*, that *maketh a Man's Enemies to be at peace with him*; in a word, it is his Providence that governs the World. And to him therefore we are

† Valdè namque apud Dominum utraq; hæc ſibi neceſſario congruunt, ut & oratione operatio, & operatione fulciatur oratio. *D. Hieron. in Lament. Jerm. c.* 3. 41.

Deut. 8. 18.
1 Sam. 2. 30.
Pſal. 91. 15, 16.
Job 5. 19.
Prov. 16. 7.

to

to addreſs our ſelves in all our Neceſſities, being anxiouſly *careful for nothing*, as the Apoſtle St. *Paul* * directs, *but in every thing by Prayers and Supplications, with Thankſgivings, making our Requeſts known to God*; who alone can, and if we ſeek to him in ſincerity, will, in his due time reſcue us out of our Diſtreſs.

* Phil. 4. 6.

2. *We are to avoid whatever tends to fruſtrate theſe our Endeavours and Prayers.* The Satyriſt † *Perſius* deſervedly expoſes the folly of ſome in his time, who prayed to God for Health and Strength of Body that might endure to a good old age, and in the mean while lead a life that would naturally impair their Conſtitutions, and would hence become an occaſion of ſhortening their days. So the ‖ *Cynick* notes it as a ſhameful Solœciſm to offer Sacrifice for the procuring, or the preſervation of Health, but withall, to run into thoſe exceſſes in the very act of Worſhip, that were naturally deſtructive of the Health they prayed for. And indeed, as there is no reaſon in the World to expect that God will hear us, when we pray to him with ill Deſigns, and to bad Purpoſes, ſo neither that he will do it, when our own manner of Converſation manifeſtly contradicts our Prayers.

† Poſcis opem nervis, corpuſq; fidele Senectæ;
Eſto, age, ſed grandes patinæ tucetaq, craſſa
Annuere his ſuperos vetuere. *Sat.* 2. *v.* 42.

‖ Ἐκίνει δ' αὐτὸν καὶ τὰ θύειν μὲν τοῖς θεοῖς ὑγείας, ἐν αὐτῇ δὲ τῇ θυσίᾳ καὶ τὴν ὑγείας διαφθείρειν Diog. Laert. l. 6. in vita Diog.

He is very willing, of his immenſe Goodneſs, to ſupply the Needs of all that ſeriouſly addreſs themſelves to him; but not to fulfil the vain Requeſts of ſuch who ſhew themſelves unconcern'd whether he hearken to them or not. He will not miraculouſly preſerve thoſe from being

ing cheated, who resolve to trust Men of known Dishonesty, or that are apparently Insolvent; nor to secure their Reputation whose scandalous Wickedness must inevitably blast it; nor continue their Health who wilfully set themselves to destroy it; nor lastly, will he give us ease and quiet of Mind if we in the mean time senselesly follow those methods that most naturally tend to discompose us. And in all other cases it is absolutely necessary, in order to the Favours we hope for from him, to be at least as careful for avoiding every thing that may detain them from us at first, or may afterwards deprive us of them, as a great lover of Retirement would be to keep himself out of a continual Hurry; or rather, as one that is desirous of Life would be to preserve himself from Poison.

SECT. III.

III. BE *our Desires never so reasonable, and our Care for obtaining them never so great, and never so prudent in other Respects, yet can we not promise our selves they will be granted us, if we lead wicked and unchristian, disorderly and sinful Lives.* For this is the ready way to defeat the Designs of God's Goodness to us, and intercept the course of those Blessings which he would otherwise have bestowed upon us, and which we might yet be made partakers of, if we would be invited diligently to prepare our selves for them. Those who first * *humble themselves under his mighty hand,* lamenting and heartily bewailing their manifold Iniquities, whereby they have at any time provoked him to execute his Judgments upon them, and then *cast their*

* 1 S. Pet. 5. 6, 7.

Care

Care upon him, are the Persons that he has obliged himself to *take care of*. It is to such only as * *seek first the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness* that our B. Saviour has promised a competent provision of the things of this Life. And it ought therefore to be no surprize to others, if they meet not with a like support. * S. Mat. 6. 33.

God may suffer wicked Men, whensoever he pleases, to tast plentifully of his Munificence, heaping his Mercies upon them from day to day. There is none of them but doth some good Deeds; and seeing they have no Retribution to expect at his Hands in a future state, he may hence think fit to allow them the larger share of temporal Advantages. But then it is to be noted, that this is more than they know how to depend upon, because all his Promises of this nature are made only to them that obey his Commands, before they have the Confidence to commit themselves to his Protection; and as there is no reason to build upon what he has never thought fit to promise, so neither is there to extend his Promises farther than himself designed them.

If a profess'd Rebel should betake himself to his injured Sovereign for Relief, whereby to enable him to proceed the more successfully in his wicked Attempts against him, what welcome he might look for from him is very well known. And can they possibly have any more comfortable hopes, who obstinately persist in their Disobedience to Almighty God, and yet fly to him for Succour in their Distress, as though they had done nothing to incapacitate themselves for it? The *Israelites* could not prevail against their Enemies, the † Men of *Ai*, whilst the accursed † Jos. 7. 11, 12.

thing was amongſt them. And there is great cauſe for People ſtill to fear the like unhappy Diſappointments, whenſoever any other notorious abomination is found in them. If they adhere not faithfully to the Lord their God, to obey and ſerve him, but preferr their Luſts and Paſſions before the Obſervance of his moſt holy Laws, caſting off his Fear, and multiplying their Provocations, as if he took no notice of them; what can be more highly becoming his exact Juſtice, than to make them taſt of the fruit of their doings, by both encompaſſing them with Miſeries, and ſuffering them to faint and languiſh under them?

To uſe all other means for accompliſhing our Ends, but not to forbear offending God, upon whoſe Bleſſing all our hopes of ſucceſs depend, is juſt as if one ſick of a violent Fever ſhould reſolve conſtantly to follow his Doctor's Preſcriptions, in duly taking all his Doſes, how unagreeable ſoever, in bleeding, or being ſcarified, or otherwiſe tortured; or in abſtaining from Fleſh, or ſtrong Drinks, for fear of heightening his Diſtemper; but ſhould have no regard at all to preſerve himſelf from taking Cold, though this be at leaſt as dangerous as an error, or neglect in any of the other caſes; or as if a Man ſhould call up his Family, and beſtirr himſelf to barricado up his Windows, and guard and ſecure all the weaker places of his Houſe, from the Attempts of Thieves, by whom he apprehends himſelf about to be beſet; but ſhould in the mean time leave the Doors neither ſhut nor guarded. And it is very reaſonable to think, that being a like prepoſterous management, it may moſt probably have a like fatal Concluſion.

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Or if a Man do not live in a profess'd neglect of God's Commands, but only through Carlesness or Inadvertency permits himself to be now and then betrayed into some heinous Wickedness, he may certainly believe it, that each Sin he thus commits will be a means of alienating God from him in some degree, and consequently will leave him so much the less ground to rely upon the Divine Protection. * He cannot think in this case wholly to escape God's Hand, but has all the reason in the World to conclude, that these his Miscarriages will need some Chastisement; and if they deliver him not over to eternal Torments, will however, call for some lighter punishment here in this World, and that he ought to be very thankful that they end no worse.

God is infinitely gracious, and will not forget to make good all his Promises; but yet this hinders not but that our selves may put a bar in the way to prevent our own Happiness, by foolishly incapacitating our selves for it. And whenever we do so, it is a great weakness to delude our selves with a vain Expectation, as if our Interest in God's Providence were still the same with theirs who never offended him as we have done. He tells his own People the *Jews*, That he would estrange himself from them by reason of their Transgressions, and would not attend to them when they earnestly solicited him to become their Protector. † *When ye spread forth your Hands, I will hide mine Eyes from you; yea, when ye make many Prayers I will not hear.* But there he tells them likewise at the same time, how they might put themselves into better Circumstances,

* Multa cogitur homo tolerare, etiam remissis peccatis, quamvis ut in eam veniret miseriam primum fuerit causa peccatum. *D. August. in S. Joan. tract.* 124.

† Isa. 1. 15.

circumstances, and might regain his Favour; that is to say, if they would reform their Lives, and turn to him with all their Hearts, and walk uprightly before him. * *Wash ye, make ye clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do well, seek Judgment, relieve the Oppressed, judge the Fatherless, plead for the Widow*; and then behold for your comfort, † *If ye be thus willing and obedient ye shall eat the good of the Land.* This therefore is the way to entitle our selves to the many gracious Promises of Protection that are made throughout the Word of God, namely, to forsake all those Wickednesses which may hitherto have been a means of withholding his Blessings from any of us. There is no such contrivance for securing our selves before-hand against Afflictions, or getting rid of them whenever they befall us, as sincerely to renounce all our Sins, which have brought them upon us. Let us but amend our Ways, and become as holy, and devout, and religious, as strict, and regular, and unblameable in our Conversation as our Lord requires us to be, and we need not question an interest in all those Mercies and Blessings, and that Protection, and those Assistances which the true God has designed for his chosen Servants. ‖ *He will gather us under his Wings, and we shall be safe under his Feathers; his Faithfulness and Truth shall be our Shield and Buckler.* If we commit our Ways to him, casting our selves upon him, and by a thorough Reliance, resigning all our Desires, Wills, and Interests into his Hands, he will vouchsafe us, *aut quod volumus, aut quod melius*, either what we most desire, or what he knows to be most desirable, what our selves like best, or what he sees to be best for us.

But

* v. 16, 17.

† v. 19.

‖ Psal. 91. 4.

But ſtill it is upon this condition, that we behave our ſelves holily and uprightly before him, and do not forfeit his Kindneſs by any ſort of wilful Diſobedience. As may be collected from all the numerous Texts of Scripture which denounce Miſery, and Deſtruction, and Deſolation againſt all the workers of Iniquity. Which I the rather mention at preſent (amongſt others) for theſe two following purpoſes.

1. To vindicate the Divine Providence in relation to the manifold Calamities whereto Mankind are obnoxious, and to ſhew where we are uſually to look for the true cauſe of our Misfortunes, that we are not to charge them upon God, but upon our own tranſgreſſion of his Laws. For after all Mens care in other reſpects, it is no reflection upon God's Goodneſs, though he ſeem to withdraw himſelf from them, when they have given him juſt occaſion for it, by indulging themſelves in their Iniquities. It is a merciful rather, a gentle and moderate puniſhment of their Offences, if he deny them only the Comforts of this Life, when they have moreover deſerved the intolerable ſeverities of the other. And it is but a juſt and equal method of procedure towards them, when any are hardened in their Sins, if he make them to ſuffer for it, both here and hereafter. Nor is there any thing more plainly declared in Scripture, than that *the wicked ſhall fall by his own wickedneſs, and deſtruction ſhall be to the workers of iniquity*; That *his own iniquities ſhall take the wicked himſelf, and he ſhall be holden with the cords of his Sins.* And again, That *it ſhall not be well with the wicked, becauſe they fear not before God.* with multitudes of other Expreſſions to the ſame purpoſe. The Apoſtle S. *James*

* Prov. 11. 5. c. 21. 15. c. 5. 22. Eccleſ. 8. 13.

charges Mens heavy Disappointments upon their either not seeking to God for Assistance and Support, or not doing it aright. * *Ye lust and have not*, saith the Apostle, *ye kill and desire to have, and cannot obtain; ye fight and warr, yet ye have not, because ye ask not; ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.*

* S. James 4. 2, 3.

And the wise man presents us with a terrible Commination of an amazing and yet certain contempt that God will have for Persons, when they dare to apply themselves to him for what they want, without attending to what he requires of them. † *Because I have called and ye refused, I have stretched out my hand and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh. When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you, then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early but they shall not find me: for that they hated knowledge, and did not chuse the fear of the Lord. They would none of my counsel, they despised all my reproof. Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices.* And no marvel if what is thus threatened be accordingly fulfill'd. However this is no prejudice to them that are duly qualify'd for the Divine Favour, nor any proof that these shall not have whatever Promises they meet with for their encouragement, some way or other made good to them; but it teaches us on the other hand, to what source the very best are to impute their Sufferings, and that (though God may

† Prov. 1. 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31.

have

have other wiſe Ends to be ſerved, and good uſes to be made of them, yet) their Sins are the only meritorious cauſe of them.

2. To caution Perſons againſt the likelieſt means of fruſtrating their Hopes: For if God's promiſes of Protection are made particularly and only to the Righteous, it muſt needs be, that ſo far as any one falls ſhort of this Character, ſo much the leſs Intereſt he will have in thoſe Promiſes. His Iniquities, if they do not utterly prevent the Bleſſings he deſires, (as he has too great reaſon to fear they may) will yet be ſure to deprive him of that undaunted truſt in God's Goodneſs, which he would otherwiſe have found to be an admirable Conſolation in all Conditions. So that hereby he becomes at beſt but like a deſolate Man in the Ocean labouring for his life, or that is left unfortunately in a deſart Iſland, where he has a poſſibility to eſcape, but has no aſſurance of it to depend upon. A Veſſel may come that way, and eaſe him of his fears and dangers, when about to be ſwallowed up of the mercileſs Waves, or devoured by ſome ravenous Beaſt of prey, and may bring him ſafe to his own Home; but this is more than he can any way promiſe himſelf. And if no one in his Wits would knowingly quit his Ship to run either of theſe hazards, much leſs ſhould any dare to allow themſelves in what may expoſe them to the juſt Wrath of Almighty God, and hence may exclude them from that Intereſt in his Favour, which is the beſt Support under all Calamities, and the want whereof, if it do not prevail with him to deny them whatſoever good Things they ask of him, yet leaves them at very great uncertainty, whether they ſhall partake of them or not; and again, whether

ther it shall be for their benefit if they be vouchsafed them, or only in order to their greater Condemnation.

SECT. IV.

IV. *ALL therefore that I take to be implied in this Duty is a considerate and a rational Reliance upon God through Christ for the necessary Blessings of this, as well as the inestimable Rewards of the other Life.* It is a Resting upon him as our great Benefactor, Patron, and Protector, with a firm perswasion, that whilst we faithfully perform our part, by confining our Desires and Expectations to necessary Things, and taking the proper Measures for obtaining them, and capacitating our selves for them, he will not refuse to grant us a suitable supply of them, but will prosper our Endeavours, and will also hear our Prayers, and help us out where our Endeavours fail. And so it consists of these two Branches.

1. A steady dependance upon God to take care of us in all our Streights; and consequent hereupon

2. A quiet composure of Mind in all our greatest Exigencies, upon consideration of the Care that he takes of us.

1. *A steady Dependance upon God to take care of us in all our Streights*, as knowing, that if we seek to him aright, he will be ready to succour and provide for us, though never so unable to help our selves. There is no case so forlorn but he regards it, and has by him a Remedy in store for it, which if duely apply'd, will effectually work a cure. If he but command Deliverance for his Servants, all the Power of Men

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or Devils cannot prevent it; and this he never refuses to do, but when persons shew themselves unfit for his Kindness, or else desire what would be no real Kindness to themselves. In all other Cases he is abundantly ready to dispense his Favours to Mankind, not only beyond their deserts, but very often beyond their utmost hopes.

And hence he requires us to fix our Eyes upon him *in the needful time of trouble*; and if we either foresee any Evil at a distance, which according to the working of natural Causes must be unavoidable, or groan at present under any grievous Affliction, which we know not how else to get remov'd, in neither of these Instances to distrust his paternal Affection to us, but encourage our selves in a Belief, that upon condition we sue to him, and rest upon him as we ought, he will be mindful of us, and will be sure, ἐν καιρῷ, as S. *Peter* speaks, *in due time*, when he observes a proper season for it, to administer to our Necessities. * 1 S. Pet. 5. 6.

And, indeed, considering the Transitoriness of our present State, and the uncertainty of every thing we can possess or hope for in it, and that it is not in our power to make our Condition as we would have it, or to preserve it if it were such, but that for ought we know to the contrary, some unlucky chance may the very next moment either take away all our Enjoyments from us, or us from them; and therefore we can have no security of any thing but from the good Providence of God, no prospect of Happiness, whether here or hereafter, but only from his boundless Compassion; considering these things, I say, it is easie to inferr how nearly our Interest depends upon his gracious Inclinations towards us, his perpetual Care being our best,

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our only Defence against those numerous Evils, to which, were it not for this, each one would lie continually expos'd; and consequently what egregious folly it is not to rely intirely upon him for those Benefits that are to be expected only from him. I confess, were Mankind capable of making any tolerable provision for themselves, without the Divine Assistance, they would have so much the less Encouragement to cast themselves upon God, and would therefore act with less inconsistence in the neglect of him. But nothing sure can be more highly reasonable, than for poor Creatures, who are nothing without God, and neither have nor can hope for any thing but from his Bounty, readily to deliver up all their concerns into his Hands, with all the thankfullest acknowledgments that may be of his unspeakable Loving-kindness, in condescending to become their Guardian, to manage their Affairs for them so much more wisely and to so much better advantage, than themselves could. This therefore is the former Branch of this important Duty, a steady Dependance upon God to take care of us in all our Streights.

2. *A quiet composure of Mind in all our greatest Exigencies*, upon consideration of the Care he takes of us. And could we but so *cast our Care upon God*, as not to have it still remaining upon our selves any farther than is requisite in order to the gracious Designs of his Providence towards us, this would necessarily dispose us *not to take thought for the morrow*; to forbear fretting and tormenting our selves with a fearful expectation of what possibly may happen hereafter, and yet withal possibly may not; and would enable us on the contrary heartily to rejoice that we are

not

not left destitute, but have an infinitely good God to order all our Affairs for us. There is no better sign of a perfect Dependance upon God, than a Mind prepared for all Events, and that fears not to be miserable whilst in his Hands, though in the midst of outward Dangers and Distractions; nor any thing that tends more naturally to our present satisfaction.

This is the most sovereign Antidote against that endless Solicitude which the worldly-wise Men too often labour under. And whosoever sets himself in good earnest to make tryal of it, besides that he acts like a good Christian, and takes care for Eternity, he will find himself to have moreover laid the best Foundation for his own Happiness in this World. Wherein, though he cannot expect to be wholly freed from Troubles, he will certainly be enabled to bear them with much the greater alacrity, by reason of the assurance he has, that God on whom he trusts, knows how to over-rule them all to his advantage.

Wherefore it was no unaccountable flight of fancy in the Emperor *Antoninus*, but the result of a serious Contemplation of the Instability of all earthly Enjoyments, that he professes, * *He should not desire to live in the World, were it not for a good God and a Providence*; and the inestimable Benefits that hence arise to Mankind. And in truth, whosoever weighs with himself the infinite variety of Accidents whereto this Life is obnoxious, and the need there is of an Almighty Hand to direct them, as may best serve the Ends of living, will find abundant cause with this Roval Philo-

* Εἰ δὲ μὴ ἔστιν, ἢ ἐ μέλει αὐτοῖς περὶ ἀνθρωπείων, πῶς μοι ζῆν ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ κενῷ θεῶν, ἢ προνοίας κενῆς; Εἰς ἑαυτον, l. 2. 8.

Philosopher, * to *adore and confide in, and rely upon* the guidance of that infinite Wisdom, which incessantly exerts it self for the good of the Creation. And being thus made sensible of his own Insufficiency, and taught to place his Confidence in God as a sure Defence against all assaults, it is hardly conceivable, that whatever Misfortunes should make any lasting impression upon him. For having learned to betake himself to God for shelter, whensoever any thing of this nature appears, he is soon convinced that he needs no longer perplex himself about it, because his God having undertaken for him, he knows assuredly it shall never hurt him. Perhaps he may have it speedily removed; but if not, he will not suffer himself to be terrify'd at it, but will rather consider, that it would never be permitted to lie upon him, but for some just and weighty Reason, and some way or other for his own benefit.

Thus therefore we are *to cast our Care upon God*, by doing what we are able for our own Relief, and then humbly and faithfully depending upon his Providence for the Event. We must see to moderate and restrain our Desires, and to use the best means we can for obtaining them, must do what is in our power, must pray to God for what is above it, and must be sure to serve and obey him, and to shun as much as in us lies, whatever might with-hold him from granting our Requests. And then, but not till then, may we safely comfort our selves, with a firm

* Ἀλλ' ἤτοι κυκεὼν, καὶ ἀντεμπλοκὴ, καὶ σκεδασμὸς· ἢ ἕνωσις, καὶ τάξις, καὶ πρόνοια. Εἰ μὲν οὖν τὰ πρότερα, τί καὶ ἐπιθυμῷ εἰκαίῳ συγκρίματι, καὶ φυρμῷ τοιούτῳ ἐνδιατρίβειν; τί δέ μοι καὶ μέλει ἄλλου τινὸς, ἢ τὸ ὅπως ποτὲ αἷα γίνεσθαι; τί δὲ καὶ ταράσσομαι· ἥξει γὰρ ἐπ' ἐμὲ ὁ σκεδασμὸς, ὅ, τι ἂν ποιῷ· εἰ δὲ θάτερά ἐστι, σέβω, καὶ εὐσταθῶ, καὶ θαῤῥῶ τῷ διοικοῦντι. L. 6. 8.

firm perſuaſion that God will certainly be mindful of us, and of our Affairs; and that we need not therefore torment our ſelves upon either of theſe accounts. For although he will not be pleaſed with a fruitleſs reliance upon him, a ſtupid neglect of all our concerns, that he alone may take care of us; yet if we labour aright to entitle our ſelves to his Protection; that is to ſay, if we curb our unreaſonable Deſires, and in all reſpects uſe the beſt means we can for getting thoſe ſatisfied that are reaſonable, we need not doubt but his Kindneſs will be extended to us. Let us but acquit our ſelves well in theſe Particulars, and we may thenceforward freely depend upon it, that he will beſtow upon us all that he ſhall ſee neceſſary for us; and therefore that we ſhall have no cauſe to be overwhelmed with Fear or Grief, *ſorrowing as men without hope*, how hard ſoever our Condition be, but at our loweſt ebb may look upon it as a mighty Conſolation, that we have a moſt gracious God to concern himſelf for us, and on whom we may at any time *caſt our Care*, and reſt ſecure that he will *take Care of us* when we do ſo.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

The Neceſſity of Caſting our Care upon God.

I Come now in the Second place to obſerve *our indiſpenſible Obligation to this Duty of putting our Truſt in God, and caſting all our Care upon Him.* A Duty which not only Almighty God may juſtly expect at our Hands, as we are his Creatures, and have our whole Subſiſtence from him, but which he hath likewiſe frequently and very expreſly required in the Holy Scriptures both of the *Old* and *New Teſtament.*

In the former of which the holy *Pſalmiſt* profeſſes in multitudes of places, * That his own *Truſt* was conſtantly *in the Lord*, and earneſtly invites others in like manner † *to commit their ways to God, and put their truſt in him*; ‖ *to caſt their burden upon him that he may ſuſtain them*; * *and to call upon him in the day of trouble, that he may deliver them.* And again, for their Encouragement herein, † he promiſes a Bleſſedneſs to *the man that maketh the Lord his truſt.* And again, he ‖ admires *the great Goodneſs which God had laid up for them that fear him, and which he had wrought for them that put their truſt in him before the ſons of men*; and undertakes for ſuch, that they ſhall be ſecure, whether from outward dangers or from inward fears; and that *mercy* * *ſhall compaſs them about*, and

* Pſal. 4. 5. & 36. 7. & 37. 3, 5. & 62. 8. & 115. 9, &c.
† Pſ. 55. 22.
‖ Pſ. 50. 15.
* Pſ. 34. 8, 22. & 40. 4.
† Pſ. 31. 19.
‖ Pſ. 91. 3, &c. 112. 7.
* Pſ. 32. 10.

† *they*

* *they ſhall be even as the Mount* Sion, *which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever.* * Pſ. 125. 1.

And his Son *Solomon* ſpeaks alſo to the ſame purpoſe, exhorting † *to truſt in the Lord with all our heart, and not to lean to our own underſtanding*, as if we could carve better for our ſelves; and aſſures us that ‖ *he who putteth his truſt in the Lord ſhall be made fat and* * *ſhall be ſafe, and ſhall have his thoughts eſtabliſhed.* † Prov. 3. 5. ‖ 28. 25. * 29. 25. † 16. 3.

The Prophet *Iſaiah* likewiſe excites to a ready dependance upon God, as the beſt ſupport in all conditions; as a help that will never fail, ‖ *Truſt ye in the Lord for ever, for in the Lord* Jehovah *is everlaſting ſtrength*; as a help at hand even in the loweſt Eſtate, * *Who is he among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his ſervant, that walketh in darkneſs and hath no light, let him truſt in the name of the Lord and ſtay upon his God*; as a help in whom whoſoever truſted, † was to *poſſeſs the Land and to inherit God's holy Mountain*; and laſtly as a help that could ſecure from all hurt, and even from the fear of it, ‖ *Behold God is my ſalvation, I will truſt and not be afraid; for the Lord* Jehovah *is my ſtrength and my ſong, he alſo is become my ſalvation.* And at another time, * *Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whoſe mind is ſtayed on thee; becauſe he truſteth in thee.* ‖ Iſa. 26. 4. * 50. 10. † 57. 13. ‖ 12. 2. * 26. 3.

And God himſelf by the Prophet *Jeremiah* encourages to a reliance upon his care, even in behalf of thoſe whoſe condition is oftentimes the moſt helpleſs in this World, the Widows and the Orphans, whom he condeſcends to promiſe that he will look after, when they have none other to take care of them. † *Leave thy fatherleſs Children, and I will preſerve them alive, and let thy Widows truſt in me.* ‖ And *bleſſed*, ſaith † Jer. 49. 11. ‖ 17. 7, 8.

the ſame Prophet, *is the man that truſteth in the Lord, and whoſe hope the Lord is; For he ſhall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that ſpreadeth out her Roots by the River; and ſhall not ſee when heat cometh; but her Leaf ſhall be green, and ſhall not be careful in the year of draught, neither ſhall ceaſe from yielding Fruit.*

* Lam. 3.25. And again it is declared of God, * *that he is good unto them that wait for him, to the Soul that* † Nah. 1. 7. *ſeeketh him*, that he is † *a ſtrong hold in the day of trouble*, and that he doth not over-look the wants of them that flee to him in their ſtreights, but *knoweth them that truſt in him.*

And in the New Teſtament our Bleſſed Saviour divers times inculcates the Neceſſity of this Duty, and preſſes it by Arguments obvious and intelligible enough to the meaneſt Capacity; inferring from our own Inability to help our ſelves, in that we can no more preſerve our own Lives, or provide for their ſupport without God's Bleſ- ‖ S. Matt. 6. 27. ſing, than we ‖ *can add to the height of our ſtature*; and from the Providence of God manifeſted in the * v. 26, 28, 29. production and preſervation of * *Birds* and *Flowers*; and from the reflexion it would be upon his Diſciples, to be as Diffident of God's Goodneſs, † v. 32. † as *the Gentiles* who had never known our Saviour or his Goſpel; and again from the wonted affection of natural Parents to their Children, in- ‖ S. Matt. 7. 11. aſmuch as ‖ *if theſe being evil know how to give good gifts unto their Children*, it is an eaſie concluſion that *our Father which is in heaven will much more give good things to them that ask him.* And in a word our Bleſſed Saviour accounted it a ſufficient Preſervative againſt a ſolicitous Care of our * c. 6. 32. ſelves, * that *our heavenly Father knoweth what things we have need of.* The force of all which argu-

arguings of our Saviour is this, That the beſt way to free Men from their Anxieties upon the account of this Life's inconveniences, is to remember and lay ſeriouſly to heart, that all our own contrivances and endeavours will never ſtand us in ſtead of themſelves, and it is God's Bleſſing only that can render them effectual to our ſupport; and by conſequence that it is both our Duty and our Intereſt, to be entirely at his diſpoſal, hoping for whatſoever we need from him alone.

And after our Bleſſed Saviour his Apoſtles in like manner direct us, * *not to truſt in our ſelves, but in God who raiſeth the dead*; † *to commit the keeping of our ſouls to him in well-doing as unto a faithful Creator*; ‖ *and not to truſt in uncertain Riches, but in the living God, who giveth us all things richly to enjoy*; and at other times require us * to *be careful for nothing, but in every thing to let our requeſts be made known to him,* † *to caſt all our care upon him, and not to caſt away our confidence in him, which*, we are certainly informed in the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews*, ‖ *hath great recompence of reward.* Where we have alſo that gracious and comfortable Promiſe (made firſt to * *Jacob* in his Journey towards *Haran*, and afterwards more expreſly † to *Joſhua* when he was ſent to conduct the *Iſraelites* over *Jordan*) applied for the benefit of Chriſtians in general, and delivered in very emphatical and ſignificant Terms. ‖ Ὀυ μή σε ἀνῶ, οὐδ' ὐ μή σε ἐγκαλίπω, *I will never leave thee, nor forſake thee.* So that each one may boldly ſay, *The Lord is my helper, and I will not ſhall fear what man ſhall do unto me.*

* 2 Cor. 1. 9.
† 1 S. Pet. 4. 19.
‖ 1 Tim. 6. 17
* Phil. 4. 6.
† 1 S. Pet. 5. 7
‖ Heb. 10. 35.
* Gen. 28. 15.
† Joſ. 1. 5.
‖ Heb. 13. 5, 6.

And the rather to engage us to behave our ſelves accordingly, the Holy Scriptures preſent

us with numerous inſtances of God's Saints, and even of our Bleſſed Lord himſelf, who in their ſeveral Generations have truſted in God, and have been comfortably rewarded for it. There
* Rom. 4. 18. we have the Faith of * *Abraham, who againſt hope believed in hope*, or as it is related more large-
† Heb. 11. 17, 18, 19. ly in the Epiſtle to the † *Hebrews*, who *when he was tried offered up his only-begotten ſon* Iſaac *in whom the promiſed ſeed was to be called, accounting that God was able to raiſe him even from the dead; from whence alſo he received him in a figure*, or for a Type of the Bleſſed *Jeſus*, who was to riſe again from the Grave, as certainly as *Iſaac* was ſaved from off the Wood, whereon he was about to have been ſlain. We have the Faith of *Moſes*,
‖ v. 24, 25. ‖ *who when he was come to years, refuſed to be called the ſon of* Pharaoh's *Daughter, and choſe rather to ſuffer affliction with the People of God, than to enjoy the pleaſures of ſin for a ſeaſon.* We have the Faith of *Job*, who after all his dreadful loſſes, enough to have utterly overwhelmed one of leſs patience and reſignation than himſelf, * *ſin-*
* Job 1. 22. *ned not nor charged God fooliſhly*, and under all the farther ſufferings he endured, behaved himſelf with that continual obſervance of Almighty God, and dependance upon him, that God at length ſaw fit to look more favourably towards
† c. 42. 12. him, and to turn his ſorrows into joy, by † *bleſſing his latter end more than his beginning.* We have the Faith of *David*, and the admirable benefit he ſo frequently boaſteth himſelf to have found by it, throughout his Book of Pſalms. And to omit multitudes of others, we have the Faith of our ever Bleſſed Redeemer himſelf, profeſſing even at the time of his apprehending, that he could eaſily have obtained of his Fa-

ther

ther * *more than twelve Legions of Angels* for his reſcue, but that he choſe rather to undergo the utmoſt cruelty of his Adverſaries in obedience to the Father's Will; and who readily ſubmitted to die upon the Croſs, as knowing that he ſhould quickly riſe again; † *whence alſo he was highly exalted, and had a Name given him which is above every Name, that at the Name of Jeſus every Knee ſhould bow, of things in Heaven, and things in earth, and things under the Earth, and that every Tongue ſhould confeſs that Jeſus Chriſt is Lord, to the Glory of God the Father.*

* S. Mat. 26. 53.

† Phil. 2. 9, 10, 11.

And laſtly, We have the Faith of the Apoſtles and firſt Diſciples, who ‖ in the midſt of the greateſt Dangers, and even of Death it ſelf were not at all diſcouraged from continuing their Truſt in God, and by this means had the happineſs to prevail in their deſign of propagating the Goſpel here, againſt the united attempts of both *Jews* and *Gentiles* to the contrary; beſides the ſingular Honour to which they have been long ſince advanced in the other World. Such ſignal encouragement have we to the performance of this Duty.

‖ 2 Cor. 1. 10.

And on the contrary, we never find the *Iſraelites* murmuring and diſtruſtful of God's Providence, but they were preſently made to ſmart for it. That Patience and Long-ſuffering which bare with them in other caſes, would not protect them when they ſet themſelves thus ungratefully to affront the Majeſty of Heaven. God might well expect that the numerous Miracles he had condeſcended to work for them time after time, ſhould have diſpoſed them conſtantly to place their whole Truſt in him. And when they took the contrary Courſe, and inſtead of

praiſing and admiring his abundant Goodneſs towards them, ſtuck not to reflect upon him, as if he were not duly mindful of them, they might reaſonably conclude that he would avenge himſelf upon them for it. * Thus it fared with that incredulous Lord, who would not believe the Prophet *Eliſha* foretelling that the next day they ſhould be eaſed of the Famine, with which they were ſo ſeverely ſtreightened in the Siege of *Samaria*, by the Hoſt of *Benhadad* King of *Syria*; for † having *the Charge of the Gate* committed to him, whilſt he was attending there (as a juſt Judgment of God upon him for his diffidence) *the People trod upon him in the Gate, and he died*, after this manner verifying the Prophet's prediction, that he ſhould behold the plentiful Proviſion that would be made for them, but ſhould not be permitted to taſte of it.

* 2King 7.1,2.

† v. 17.

And thus it was alſo with their whole People when they were diſſatisfied with that wonderful Providence of God over them above all other Nations, of which they had had ſuch ample Experience, and began to exclaim againſt God, ſaying, ‖ *Can God furniſh a Table in the Wilderneſs? Behold he ſmote the ſtony Rock, that the Waters guſhed out and the Streams over-flowed; can he give Bread alſo? can he provide Fleſh for his People?* This was an affront the Almighty could not bear with, and therefore was wroth with them for it, *ſo that a Fire was kindled againſt* Jacob, *and anger alſo came up againſt Iſrael:* And all for this reaſon, *becauſe they believed not in God, and truſted not in his Salvation.*

‖ Pſ. 78. 19, 20, 21, 22.

The Summ is, that faithfully to put our truſt in God for whatever good things we want, whether

ther for Soul or Body, for our ſelves or ours, is a Duty practiſed and required by the Prophets of old, and by our Saviour and his Apoſtles ſince, together with great Promiſes annex'd and Mercies vouchſafed to it, and with Threatenings on the contrary, and dreadful Judgments inflicted, when Men have refuſed to behave themſelves accordingly. And now to apply this Doctrine a little more particularly, though very briefly.

1. If a plain expreſs Command require our Obedience, here is a Duty poſitively enjoyned, and not once or twice, or only by the by (tho' this too were enough ſufficiently to notifie our Maker's Will) but divers times, and upon many occaſions, in multitudes of places in the Old Teſtament in our Saviour's Divine Sermon on the Mount, and in the Writings of his Apoſtles. Inſomuch that it is impoſſible for them who have any reverence for the Authority of Almighty God, any regard for his undoubted and oft repeated Commands, to refuſe in any caſe to put their Truſt in him.

2. If Promiſes of Bleſſings annex'd to a careful performance of this Duty can engage us to the Exerciſe of it, we have theſe likewiſe, Promiſes of Bleſſedneſs in general, and again more particularly of Life, of ſecurity from dangers, of peace and quiet of mind, of ſucceſs in our deſigns, and of a competent ſupply of the good things of this World. Whence to the neceſſary Obligations that lie upon us in point of duty to our Lord, here is added likewiſe very good encouragement with reſpect to our preſent concerns whereby the rather to invite us to what is thus earneſtly preſſed upon us. And this meditation muſt therefore be a farther aggravation of

their Diſobedience, who can find in their hearts to live in contradiction to it.

3. If the Denunciation, or Execution of Puniſhments upon any that have been remarkably diſtruſtful of the Divine Protection may ſerve to awaken Perſons into a better dependance upon God for the future; the Hiſtory of the Jewiſh Nation in the Old Teſtament preſents us with a large Catalogue of heavy Judgments inflicted upon that murmuring and diſcontented People. 1 Cor. 10. 11. Of whom the Apoſtle tells us that they were recommended as *Examples* for the Chriſtian World, to the end that we might take warning by their ſufferings, and obſerving how they miſcarried by not relying duly upon God, might become the more cautious not to ſplit upon the ſame Rock, by imitating that provoking Temper of theirs for which they paid ſo dear.

4. If the Paterns of holy Men before our Saviour's Incarnation, and of the Apoſtles and others afterwards, and even of our bleſſed Lord himſelf, that unſpotted Exemplar of an intire ſubmiſſion to his Father's Will, can perſuade us to the imitation of their unwearied dependance upon God for the gracious Completion of all his Promiſes, theſe are to be met with in great perfection, and great abundance throughout the word of God; and will therefore mightily ſhame us, if we ſteer another courſe, to God's diſhonour and our own prejudice at leaſt, perhaps to our utter Ruine. Examples are (as *Seneca* well obſerves) the † ſhorteſt and readieſt way of Teaching, and many times prevail better than Arguments; nay againſt all the ſoundeſt and weightieſt Arguments to the contrary. And we muſt leave our ſelves intolerably inexcuſable, if we are back-

† Longum eſt iter per præcepta; breve & efficax per exempla *Senec.* epiſt. 60.

backward to attend to them there only, where they manifeſtly challenge, and juſtly deſerve our moſt ſerious Attention.

5. Laſtly, If the infinite Glories conſequent upon the obſervance of this, as well as of the other Duties of our Religion can inflame our Souls with an ardent Deſire after them, we have here another eſpecial Motive to a conſcientious Practice of it. We have a recompence of reward ſet before us that can never be ſufficiently valued, *an exceeding and eternal weight of glory*, but which is never to be attained to without a ſure Truſt in God's Mercy, and a ſteady Dependance upon him *to take care of us*.

And what now can any poſſibly imagine ſhould excuſe their neglect of a Duty, whereto all are thus indiſſolubly obliged and are ſo many ſeveral ways invited? Who can hope to approve himſelf before God, whilſt he refuſes to hearken to his Voice, and be governed by him? Who can think to be ſafe in this World, that wilfully neglects the only means of his ſecurity? Or who can promiſe himſelf to be happy hereafter? Nay, who can promiſe himſelf not to be ineffably and everlaſtingly miſerable, that eſtranges himſelf from him, in whom alone all his Happineſs muſt conſiſt, by abuſing his immenſe Goodneſs, and diſobeying his righteous Laws? The caſe muſt inevitably be very deplorable, when People obſtinately decline the only means of their own welfare, and will by no directions, or perſuaſions, or commands, or promiſes, or threatenings, or mercies, or judgments be prevailed with to apply themſelves thereto. And conſider I beſeech thee, Reader, if it be recorded in Scripture as an indelible blot upon *Aſa* King of *Judah*, that

that being towards his latter end *diſeaſed in his feet*, * *he ſought not to the Lord* for a Cure, *but to the Phyſicians* only, how much greater a reproach will it be to us Chriſtians, and how much deeper Guilt will it imply in us, who are under ſtronger and more indiſpenſible Obligations to truſt in God, and have far greater encouragement in doing it, to be ſtill unwilling to depend upon him? This argues a notorious Contempt of his unſpeakable Loving-kindneſs, and is ſo palpable a Violation of his Laws, and ſo utterly unagreeable to a truly Chriſtian temper of mind, that it is ſad to think how any can poſſibly allow themſelves in it.

* 2 Chr. 16. 12.

† Ἡ θεῖα φύσις πρὸς ταῦτα μηδαμῶς προσαγέσθω, ἀλλὰ ἀνεπίδεκτος διατηρείσθω, καὶ ἐν τῇ πάσῃ μακαριότητι Diog. Laert. in vit. Epicuri, l. 10.

Τὸ μακάριον καὶ ἄφθαρτον, οὔτε αὐτὸ πράγματα ἔχει, οὔτε ἄλλῳ παρέχει. Ibid.

Ut & Sext. Empir. Hypotypoſ. 3. 24. Max. Tyr. diſſert. 29. Cic. de nat. Deorum l. 1. & Sen. in Claudii Cæſaris ἀποκολοκυντώσει; & Lactant. de irâ c. 4. Cic. de Divinat. l. 2. Saluſt. Philoſ. de Diis & Mundo, c. 9.

† *Epicurus* and his Followers to aſcribe all Events to a certain blind Fortune or Chance, becauſe they believed it too great a burthen for God to undertake the Government of the World. As if the ſame Almighty Power which at firſt made all things, could not at leaſt as eaſily preſerve them all in Being and good Order, when made; or as if the ſame boundleſs Goodneſs which invited to the greater, would not invite as prevalently to the leſs. And no leſs abſurd are they who believe that God governs the World, and that all things are brought to paſs according to the ~~Diſcretion~~ direction of his Infinite Wiſdom, and yet will not be induced to caſt their Care upon him. For if thoſe argued unphiloſophically, theſe I am ſure act very unchriſtianly, very unagreeably to the Principles of their moſt holy Religion, and very dangerouſly in relation

lation to their own intereſt both Temporal and Eternal.

And, oh that Men would therefore be intreated ſeriouſly to weigh with themſelves, how undutiful they are to Almighty God, whenſoever they refuſe to put their whole Concerns into his hands, and what deadly Enemies to themſelves. Let us remember what it is to diſtruſt his Care of us, that it is no leſs than to call his Veracity into queſtion, and to ſlight that Infinite Authority by vertue whereof he commands us to rely upon him in all conditions, and that unſpeakable Goodneſs which inclines him to take care of us; and that the inevitable Conſequence of ſuch a complicated Wickedneſs muſt needs be very terrible.

Had God but barely offered his free Protection to every one that would humbly ſeek to him for it, this one would think ſhould have been charm enough to have induced all that had any ſenſe of his kindneſs, or any tolerable regard for their own Welfare, to betake themſelves immediately to the ſhelter of his Wings. And they that had neglected it, could have blamed themſelves only for all the Evils which they had fooliſhly brought upon themſelves, by not thankfully embracing ſo ſingular a Favour. But when beſides this he hath farther condeſcended to back all his Propoſals of this Nature with his poſitive and frequent Commands, and his known Vengeance upon the Contemners of them, ſtill to keep at diſtance from him, cannot but be an intolerably heinous Provocation. It is not to be conceived that he would ever have uſed theſe ſeveral Methods of addreſs to us, if he had eſteemed it an indifferent matter whether we reſt

reſt upon him or not. And if he be heartily concerned for it, the inference is very eaſie, that he will be highly incenſed againſt all that do not readily comply with what he ſo oft requires, and is ſo much concerned for.

And in God's Name what is it we propound to our ſelves when we act thus inconſiſtently with the Principles we profeſs to be governed by? What occaſion do we hereby give for a like doleful Lamentation, with that of our Bleſſed Saviour over *Jeruſalem*, when he would have healed them and they would not be healed, would have ſaved them and they would not be ſaved, and for a like Vengeance too with that which he denounced againſt that rebellious City. Our Lord * *would often have gathered their Children together, even as a Hen gathereth her Chickens under her Wings, and they would not*; therefore ſaith he, *Behold your houſe is left unto you deſolate.* And ſhould he proceed to a like doom upon our ſelves, whilſt we perſiſt in a diſtruſt of his Care of us; ſhould he ſend all the temporal Calamities to ſeize us of which our Nature is capable; and when we are worn out with theſe, ſhould he deliver us over to his Eternal vengeance, it muſt however be acknowledged that he were righteous in all his doings, and our deſtruction were only from our ſelves.

* S. Mat. 23. 37, 38.

What wonder if that Veſſel run a-ground, or ſplit upon a Rock, whoſe Mariners in caſe of imminent Danger refuſe the aſſiſtance of a skilful Pilot, and chooſe to turn her a-drift, and let her ſteer they know not how? Yet how much leſs hope of ſafety is there for thoſe that preferr their own vain Imaginations before the Infinite Wiſdom of Almighty God, taking upon them to

to provide for themſelves, rather than wait till he ſhall be pleaſed to do it for them? For ſuch add direct Rebellion to their Indiſcretion, not only undervaluing God's abundant readineſs *to take care of them*, but provoking him alſo by their wilful Breach of his known Commands, to ſend forth Storms and Tempeſts to overwhelm them. They highly offend God, and wrong themſelves at preſent, and (to compleat their Folly) they *treaſure up to themſelves wrath againſt the day of wrath, and the revelation of the righteous Judgment of God.* Which being the diſmal, yet certain Conſequence of the neglect of this Duty, it is ſtrange there ſhould be ſuch need of exhorting to obſerve it. Nor can any thing but a want of conſideration with-hold Perſons from the conſtant Practice of it, ſince without it they can neither act like Chriſtians, nor ſhew themſelves wiſe for this or for the other World.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

The Reasonableness of Casting our Care upon God.

THE third thing I propounded was *to enforce the Practice of this so necessary a Duty, from the Assurance we have of God's continual Care of us*; that observing what Regard he has for us, what a good Providence he exercises over us, and how willing he is to multiply his Benefits upon us, we may hence also be invited *to cast all our Care upon him.* And this I shall endeavour to do from these three following Considerations.

1. Of the Providence of God in general, and the Care he takes of all his Creatures.

2. Of the peculiar Offers of Protection that are made in Scripture to the Righteous.

3. Of the Experience we have had of his Goodness hitherto, and the Reason we therefore have still to depend upon him

SECT. I.

First, *OF the Providence of God in general, and the Care he takes of all his Creatures.* Concerning which the Holy Scriptures teach us that God * *is good* and delights in *doing good*, that † *great is our Lord and great is his Power, and his Wisdom is infinite,* ‖ *neither is there*

* Ps. 119. 68.
† 147. 5.
‖ Isa. 40. 28.

there any searching of his understanding, and consequently that he knows how to maintain and to govern the World and all things therein; that as He at first * *made the Earth by his Power, established the World by his Wisdom, and stretched out the Heavens by his Discretion*; so he still † *upholds all things by the word of his Power, and* ‖ *hath in his hand the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind*; so that nothing can ever happen to any of us without his Order, or at least his Permission.

* Jer. 10. 12.
† Heb. 1. 3.
‖ Job 12. 10.

All Creatures of whatever sort are his, he made them, and he is their true Proprietor, and what then can be more natural than for his kindness to be extended to them? *He is the Author of all things*, as *Minutius Felix* * speaks, *and he observes all things, nor can ought be concealed from him, for he is in the darkness, and in our thoughts as in a second darkness; insomuch that we not only live under him, but may in a manner be said to live together with him.* Whatever good things any partake of, they are wholly owing to the Bounty of this † *Father of Lights, from whom cometh every good and every perfect gift*, and ‖ without whose benign Influence there is no subsisting one Moment. He is every where present, in the Heavens, the Earth, the Seas, the Air, or whatsoever part of the World, sees all things whether animate or inanimate, takes notice of what relation and dependance one of them has upon another, beholds the whole Order of second Causes, and wisely over-rules them all that they may serve to the best purposes. * His goodness diffuses it self through all the Corners of the Universe, and by his unwearied Providence and Protection all kinds of Beings are sustained, there

* Octav. p. 317, 318.
† S. Ja. 1. 17.
‖ Omne enim bonum nostrum aut ipse est, aut ab ipso. *B. August. de Doctrinâ Christianâ.* l. 1. c. 31.
* Μηδεὶς τόπος ἀργὸς εὐποιΐας Θεοῦ. Clem. Alex. str. l. 4. p. 489.

there being nothing in all the World too great to need *his Care*, nor any thing ſo little that he doth not think fit to *take care of it*.

Particularly the excellent Beauty, admirable Order, and ſingular Uſefulneſs of the Heavenly Bodies loudly proclaim a ſtupendous Hand of Providence, preſerving that Harmony amongſt them, and thoſe regular Motions and Viciſſitudes, wherein we ſee them. The contemplation whereof deeply affected the Holy Pſalmiſt, and made him break forth into that Divine Goodneſs;

* Pſ. 19. 1,2,3. * *The Heavens declare the Glory of God, and the Firmament ſheweth his handy Work. Day unto day uttereth Speech, and Night unto night ſheweth knowledge. There is no ſpeech nor language where their Voice is not heard.* There is no place even in the remoteſt parts of the World, where theſe glorious Tokens of his inceſſant Care do not abundantly manifeſt themſelves. † *He maketh* Arcturus, Orion, *and the* Pleiades, *and the Chambers of the South; and doth great things paſt finding out, yea, and wonders without Number.*

† Job 9. 9, 10.

Or if we change the Scene and look down upon this lower World, this Terraqueous Globe, the Scriptures abound with inſtances of his Care over it in divers Reſpects. They tell us that (*a*) *the Earth is full of his Riches*, (*b*) that *the Pillars of it are the Lords, and he* at firſt *ſet the World upon them*, and that he yet continues (*c*) *to bear them up*, leaſt it together with all its Inhabitants ſhould be diſſolved, that (*d*) he preſcribes the Waters of the Sea *their bounds*, and (*e*) ſends refreſhing *ſhowers* upon the Earth *making it very fruitful*, that it is by his Order (*f*) *the winds* blow, and (*g*) the *ſtorms* ariſe, (*h*) the *lightnings* break forth, and the *thunders* roar ſo terribly, that

a Pſ. 104. 24.
b 1 Sam. 2. 8.
c Pſ. 75. 3.
d Pſ. 104. 9.
e Pſal. 65. 9, 10, 11.
f Job 28 25.
g Pſ. 107 25.
h Pſ. 77. 18.

that (*i*) *the Earth trembles* at any time, *and the Foundations of the Hills are moved, and ſhaken*; and again, that he takes care of (*k*) *the wild Aſſes*, (*l*) *the wild Goats, and the Coneys*, (*m*) *the young Lions*, (*n*) *the Oxen*, (*o*) *the Hinds*, (*p*) *and every Beaſt of the Field*, (*q*) *and of the Foreſt*, (*r*) moſt curiouſly adorns *the Flowers*, (*ſ*) *feeds*, (*t*) and provides Nets for *the Birds*, (*u*) repleniſhes *the Trees* with Sap, (*w*) ſuſtains *the Fiſhes*, (*x*) *opens his Hands and ſatisfies the Deſire of every living thing*, and (*y*) ſuffers not *a Sparrow to fall to the Ground* without his obſervation; and to conclude, (*z*) *the Lord is good unto all, and his tender mercies are over*, not this or that ſort of Creature, or in this or that part of the Earth, or at one time and not at another, but abſolutely and indefinitely over, *all his Works*.

i Pſal. 18. 7.
k Pſ. 104. 11.
l v. 18.
m v. 21.
n 1 Cor. 9. 9.
o Pſ. 29. 9.
p Pſ. 50. 11.
q Pſ. 104. 20.
r S. Matt. 6. 28.
ſ v. 26.
t Pſ. 104. 12, 17.
u Pſ. 104 16.
w v. 25, 27.
x Pſ. 145. 16.
y S. Matt. 10. 29.
z Pſ. 145. 9.

But then as Mankind are more nearly related to himſelf, being made after his likeneſs, and deſigned for the perpetual enjoyment of his Divine Preſence, it is very reaſonable to ſuppoſe, that they ſhould have a particular Intereſt in his Care. And thus much therefore our Bleſſed Saviour (as I have already hinted in part) teaches in his Sermon upon the Mount, diſſuading from an eager ſolicitude for the things of this Life, as from the Experience we have had of God's Goodneſs to our ſelves, in giving us our Beings, ſo likewiſe from the regard he has for the *Birds*, and other meaner parts of the Creation. * *Take no thought for your life*, ſaith our Saviour, *what ye ſhall eat, or what ye ſhall drink, or for the Body, what ye ſhall put on*; for theſe following Reaſons:

* S. Matt. 6. 25, &c.

1. Becauſe *the Life is more than Meat, and the Body than Raiment*. Whereby is intimated,

that God who hath already vouchsafed us the better, will not refuse us the less; having given us *life*, he will not deny us those things which are requir'd for its support. *He spake the word, and we were made; he commanded, and we were created*; and dare any say, that he will not condescend to order a due provision for those to whom he hath thus bountifully given a Being? It is easie to believe, that his intent in producing us was not that we might pine away with insuperable hunger, or parch with insupportable thirst, or that we might starve for want of something to shelter us from the cold; and that therefore he will not let us languish under any of these Inconveniencies longer than he sees very good reason for it. Having bestowed upon us *Life*, which is a much greater blessing than *Meat* for it, and a *Body* which is far more valuable than the *Raiment* we put upon it, and the production whereof was a far greater work of his Omnipotence than a supply of these things is, there is no cause to fear that these shall not also be added to those other in a due proportion.

2. Because he takes care of the Birds to give them their Meat in due season. For so it follows, *Behold the fowls of the air, they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feedeth them; are ye not much better than they?* As much as to say, *Since you are certainly of far more account with God than the Fowls, and yet he makes such plentiful provision for them, your own Reason will enform you, that he will much less neglect your selves.*

3. Because his Providenceextends it self to the *Flowers of the Field* as well as to the Birds, for these also are delicately cloathed by him. *Consider*

ſider the Lilies of the Field how they grow, they toyl not, neither do they ſpin; and yet I ſay unto you, that even Solomon *in all his glory was not arrayed like one of theſe. Wherefore, if God ſo cloath the Graſs of the Field, which to day is, and to morrow is caſt into the Oven, ſhall he not much more cloath you, O ye of little faith.* Where our Saviour ſtill proceeds, *à fortiori*, as in the former caſe, only that he doth it with more advantage, arguing, that the Wiſdom and Goodneſs of God manifeſted in this lower rank of Creatures ought to convince every one, what reaſon there is to conclude, that he will much rather multiply his Bleſſings upon Mankind, whom he hath created of a nobler Race, and to whom he hath all along profeſſed much greater kindneſs. And indeed it is not conceiveable, that he will take care, not only of the Beaſts, but of the Birds too, and even of thoſe little inconſiderable Birds, the Sparrows (as I noted before) that * not one of them *falls to the ground*, or is enſnared and periſhes without his Providence; and of the Flowers to array them in ſuch gorgeous Attire, and that he will yet be regardleſs of Man, the maſter-piece of this lower World. It is not to be thought that he will have a conſtant reſpect to the Creatures, that were made for our ſake, and † *put in ſubjection under our feet*, and will neglect us for whoſe ſake they were made, and to whom they were thus ſubjected. The conſideration of a general Providence ſuſtaining theſe inferior Beings is on the contrary, a powerful Argument for engaging Men to hope for a greater Intereſt in his care, becauſe of the nearer relation they bear to him.

* Ἓν ἐξ αὐτῶν οὐ πεσεῖται ἄνευ τοῦ πατρὸς ὑμῶν τοῦ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς. D. Chryſoſt. in loc.

† Pſal. 8. 6.

And what our Saviour here proves by a very rational method of deduction, the holy Scriptures at other times expressly affirm, declaring,

* 1 Tim. 6. 17. That * *God giveth us all things richly to enjoy,*

† Act. 17. 25. † *giveth us life and breath, and all things;*

‖ S. Ja. 1. 5. ‖ *giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not;* that is, that he *giveth all necessary things*, and this not with a sparing Hand, but bountifully, *richly*, and liberally, and not to some select number of Favourites only, but *to all men*, of whatsoever Age, Language, Nation, or Religion, that it is

* Act 17. 28. *in him*, or by his assistance, that * *we live, move,*

† S. Matt. 7. 11. *and have our being*; and again, That if † we *being evil, know how to give good gifts unto our Children, our Father which is in Heaven will much more give good things to them that ask him:* And again,

‖ Job 5. 11. That he ‖ *setteth up those that be low, and those*

* v. 18. *that mourn he exalteth to safety.* * *He maketh sore and bindeth up, he woundeth, and his hands*

† v. 20. *make whole.* † *In famine he redeemeth from death, and in war from the power of the sword.*

‖ Exod. 15. 3. Sometimes he represents himself ‖ as *a man of war, and the Lord of hosts is his name*; and again,

* Psal. 46. 9. * he *maketh wars to cease unto the ends of the earth; he breaketh the bow and cutteth the spear in*

† 1 Sam. 2. 6. *sunder, and burneth the chariot in the fire.* † *He killeth and maketh alive; bringeth down to the*

‖ Psal. 146. 7, 8, 9. 107. 9. and 68. 5. *grave and bringeth back.* ‖ *He executeth judgment for the oppressed*, suiting his Relief to theirs, as he doth also to other Men's Necessities. If People be *hungry, he giveth them Food*; if *Prisoners, he looseth them* from their Confinement; if *blind*, it is he that *openeth their Eyes*; if *bowed down*, he is ready to *raise them up*; nor is he wanting to *preserve the Stranger*, or to *help the Fatherless and Widows* in their streights.

When

When any are in the most disconsolate condition, to all outward appearance, and are neither able to help themselves, nor have any Friend that will stand by them, and assist them, they have yet this comfort left, that the God of Heaven sees their Distress, and hears the Sighs and Groans which they send forth in the anguish of their Souls, and when * *Father and Mother forsake them*, and all other hope fails, *he will take them up*, and will provide for them. * Psal. 27. 10.

Neither are they only matters of greater concernment that he attends to, as *Balbus* in † *Tully* supposes of the Heathen Deities, but those likewise of least importance, even the very ‖ *Hairs of our Head, all which*, our blessed Saviour assures us, *are numbred by him.* There is nothing about us that escapes his notice, nothing in all our Affairs that he is not privy to, or wherein we may not hope for his Direction or Assistance, if we be duly qualify'd for it. † Magna Dii curant, parva negligunt. *De nat Deor. l.* 2. *c.* 66. ‖ S. Matt. 10. 30.

And now the most proper and genuine Conclusion from hence is, That if the Almighty be graciously pleased to take such abundant Care of us, there can be no reason for us to be discontented or dejected under any Occurrences. Whilst he condescends to be our * *Shepherd*, we need not fear, that he will suffer us to want any thing whereof we truly stand in need. And this same Consideration therefore the Apostle St. *Peter* urges for inviting to † *cast our care upon God*, in all our troubles or dangers. * Psal. 23. 1. † Ep. 5. 7.

Casting all your care upon him, saith the Apostle, your care of whatsoever nature, or whatsoever account, even *all your care*, *he careth for you.* As if the Apostle should said, *In doing this you don't deceive your*

by putting your truſt in one who either cannot, or will not help you; for you only fly to him, who is far better to all that humbly, dutifully, and faithfully depend upon him, than they can either deſerve or deſire; who will ſtand by you and provide for you when all other helps fail, for he careth for you.

And very good encouragement it is to put our truſt in God under our heavieſt Calamities, that we can aſſure our ſelves that he takes notice of it whenever we do ſo. How ſhould it tranſport us to reflect, that our Dependance is not upon the Arm of Fleſh, nor any of thoſe feeble helps, which are too apt to deceive us in our greateſt Exigencies, but upon the Lord God of Hoſts, who was, and is, and is to come. When Clouds gather, and the Sky is darkened, and there is no appearance of ſafety from any other Hand, how may we bleſs our ſelves to think, that we have a Refuge that never fails, a God that will never forſake us in our Diſtreſs; and that ſeeing he undertakes for us, we need fear no evil? It cannot but adminiſter ſolid Conſolation to every pious and good Chriſtian to remember, that all his ſevereſt Viſitations are not without the Providence of him who is infinitely wiſer than all Mankind, knowing our wants much better than our ſelves do; and whoſe ineffable Goodneſs will certainly incline him to chooſe and act for us much better than our ſelves could; who obſerves our Frame and Conſtitution, and the Circumſtances wherein we are ſet, and orders all his Diſpenſations with that admirable Wiſdom and Kindneſs, that when they ſeem to us moſt adverſe, we may yet find them very advantageous, unleſs our ſelves prevent it by our miſ-improvement of them.

He

He is not with us as formerly with the *Jews*, * whose Temporal Prince he was, and † to whom he vouchsafed his *Shecinah*, or especial Presence, with whom he conversed in a very particular manner by the Ministry of *Moses*, and of other Prophets immediately inspir'd, and to whom he spake besides sometimes ‖ by *Urim and Thummim*, and sometimes again "(they would persuade us) by the *Bath-col*, that Daughter of a Voice, which they tell us, was heard amongst them, after the cessation of their other Prophecies, which ended in *Malachi*; but yet he never denies us the happiness of that general Providence which he exercises over all the Sons of Men; and in the exercise whereof he is so tenderly careful of us, that he appoints us nothing but what is best for us, and what we should be sure to wish for our selves, if we did but rightly understand our own case.

* 1 Sam. 8. 7. ἀρχεῖ δὲ ὁ Θεὸς ἡγεμών ἡμῶν. Jos. Antiq. l. 4. c. 8. & alibi. Vid. & Spenc. de legibus Hebr. p. 202, &c.

† Exod. 40. 38. Numb. 9. 15. Deut. 31. 15. & alibi.

‖ 1 Sam. 28. 6. Vid. etiam Spenc. de legibus Heb. p. 853, &c. & Cun. de rep. Hebr. l. c. 2. Medes Diatrib. p. 2. in Deut. 33. 8. & D. Lightfoot's 2d. vol. p. 1067, & 68.

" Talm. Bab. in tit. Sanedrim, c. 1. fol. 11. Talm. Hieros. in tit. Berachoth fol. 3. More Nevoch. l. 2. c. 43.

It is true, he many times thinks fit to deny us what we most earnestly beg of him; and on the other hand, makes us very uneasie under the Afflictions he lays upon us; but then it is as true, that † there is no cause for us to be dissatisfied at these his Determinations concerning us. And the reason is plain, because our dislike of them proceeds only from our own short-sightedness, who are not able to distinguish what is best for us, and hence are oftentimes grieved at those events which Experience afterwards shews to have been great kind-

† Malè usurus eo quod vult accipere, Deo potius miserante non accipit. *D. August. in Joan. Tract.* 73.

nesses to us, and possibly might have been much greater, if we had minded to make a right use of them. We are at best but poor empty Beings, that plot indeed and contrive as if we were very wise, but if * Almighty God should once deliver us up to our own management we should soon ruine our selves by our own desires. We draw Schemes, and propound to our selves measures of Action, and then conclude, we have done very understandingly herein, and presently some unforeseen cross accident or other intervening, overthrows the whole frame of our imaginary Felicity, and shews us what miserable wretched Creatures we should be, should but God think fit to leave us a while to our selves. † Whereas he knows perfectly what state or condition is properest for us, which undertakings are like to succeed, and which not; what alterations the Government of the World requires in order to the accomplishment of his wise Designs, and to what changes we must therefore be liable according to the ordinary course of things; and hence must unquestionably see how to chose for us much better than we could for our selves. And when he discerns us to stand in need of Correction if he condescend to use us accordingly, that there is yet no reason to complain of such his proceedings I shall endeavour to evince by two familiar Instances; the one of a Father, and the other of a Chirurgeon; the former of which I have from Scripture, the other from S. *Augustine*, S. *Chrysostom*,

* Omnibus in terris quæ sunt à Gadibus usq;
Auroram & Gangem pauci dignoscere possunt.
Vera bona, atq; illis multum diversa remota
Erroris nebulâ. Quid enim ratione timemus
Aut cupimus.
Juv. Sat. 10.
—Nocitura togâ, nocitura petuntur
Militiâ. *Ibid.*

* Ἄνθρωποι δὲ μάταια νομίζουσιν εἰδότες οὐδέν·
Θεοὶ δὲ κατὰ σφέτερον πάντα τελοῦσι νόον.
Theogn.

Soſtome, and others, and they are both very pat and pertinent to my purpoſe.

1. Wherefore let me ask in the firſt place, Would any one complain of a tender loving Father, that (though unwilling to chaſtiſe his dear Children) he doth it however when he ſees it neceſſary, and that it cannot be avoided without injuring them by his Lenity? would this be thought to argue a want of Kindneſs in him, or would any one blame him for it? It is plain the Wiſe-man was of another mind, when he affirmed, That * *whom the Lord loveth he correcteth, even as a Father the Son in whom he delighteth*; and again, That † *he who ſpareth the Rod hateth his Son, but he that loveth him, chaſteneth him betimes.* To the ſame effect likewiſe ſpeaks *Eliphaz the Temanite*, pronouncing a bleſſedneſs to the perſon whom the Almighty thus puniſhes, in order to his recovery from any kind of Wickedneſs. ‖ *Behold, happy is the Man whom God correcteth, therefore deſpiſe not thou the chaſtening of the Almighty.* As alſo doth the Author of the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews*, * *My Son, deſpiſe not thou the chaſtening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him. For whom the Lord loveth he chaſteneth, and ſcourgeth every Son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chaſtening God dealeth with you as with Sons, for what Son is he whom the Father chaſteneth not?*

* Prov. 3. 12.
† 13. 4.
‖ Job 5. 17.
* Heb. 12. 5, 6, 7.

A natural Parent holds himſelf obliged to reſtrain and curb his Children, when they grow extravagant and unruly; and he doth it accordingly, not out of any averſion to them, or from an unconcernedneſs for their welfare, but juſt the contrary, becauſe he accounts of this as the propereſt expedient for reclaiming them, and conſequently,

consequently, the greatest kindness he can do them. * And if Almighty God condescend to take the same course where he sees it requisite, this should not only teach us submission to his Divine Will, but should moreover excite our unfeigned gratitude to him for the use of so effectual a method in order to our Reformation and Salvation. Which, how unagreeable soever it may seem to flesh and blood, we shall have great cause to bless him for, if it but serve in any measure to the promoting this gracious design.

* Cum videris bonos viros, acceptos; Diis laborare, sudare, per arduum ascendere, malos autem lascivire & voluptatibus fluere; cogita filiorum nos modestiâ delectari, vernularum licentiâ; illos disciplina strictiori contineri, horum ali audaciam. Idem tibi de Deo liqueat, bonum virum in deliciis non habet: experitur, indurat, sibi illum præparat. *Senec. de Providentia, c.* 1.

Imo vero cum vexamur ac premimur, tum maximè gratias agimus indulgentissio Patri: quod corruptelam nostram non patitur longius procedere, sed plagis ac verberibus emendat, ex quo intelligimus nos esse Deo curæ; quoniam cum peccamus irascitur. *Lactant. Instit. l.* 5. *c.* 23.

2. The other Instance I mentioned is of a Chirurgeon, who, if he be faithful in his Employment, will search a Sore to the quick, whereby to detect any latent Ulcer, that might otherwise obstruct the efficacy of his Applications, and the benefit that is expected from them. As also at other times he lances, scarifies, lays on Corrosives, or proceeds to Excision, when all other means appear incompetent, and be the Man never so uneasie under these necessary Tortures, and make never such complaint of them, he is not discouraged at it; for † *he hearkens not to the unreasonable Desires of his Patient, but to his Condition, and the Means that are serviceable in order to his recovery.*

† Sub medicamento positus ureris, secaris, clamas: non audit medicus ad voluntatem, sed audit ad sanitatem. *D. An-*

It

It is not his province to attend to the Entreaties of one that would venture the ruining himself to avoid a present smart; but to consider how his health may be best restored, and to omit nothing that he knows necessary to this end. And his doing this is so far from being a fault in him, or an instance of Inhumanity, or any unkindness, that it is the truest sign of his Fidelity, and will deservedly gain him the most thanks at last. Which plainly testifies the intolerable folly and wickedness of imagining Almighty God to neglect us upon the account of those seasonable wants, or pains, or losses, or disappointments, which should teach us rather to observe and weigh with our selves how willing he is to promote our happiness, how truly he consults our Interest, and orders his Dispensations accordingly, it being many times very apparently no less an instance of his Goodness * to deny us our Requests, than it is at other times to grant them.

gust. in Ps. 21. *Expos.* 2. Plorat secandus, & secatur; plorat urendus & uritur. Non est illa crudelitas, absit ut sævitia medici dicatur. Sævit in vulnus ut homo sanetur, quasi vulnus palpetur, homo perditur. *Id. de verbis Domini Serm.* 15. Ὥσπερ οὖν ἰατρὸν, οὐ τρέφοντα μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἄγχοντα λιμῷ, οὐκ εἰς ἀγορὰν μόνον ἐξάγοντα ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐν οἴκοις που κατακλείοντα, οὐκ ἀλείφοντα μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ καίοντα καὶ τέμνοντα θαυμάζομεν· (εἰ γὰρ καὶ ἐναντία τὰ γινόμενα, ἀλλὰ πρὸς ἓν ὁρᾷ τέλος) οὕτω καὶ τὸν θεὸν ὑπὲρ ἁπάντων ἀνυμνεῖν χρὴ, &c. D. Chrysost. in Ps. 148. v. 10. Si malum morbi fortius creverit, majora remedia quæruntur, & pro salute hominis solicita fortius se medicina opponit; asperi cibi potus ingeruntur amari. Et si convaluerit malum, & ignis abhibetur & ferrum. *Jul. Pirmic. de err. gent. p.* 34. Ἡ δὲ χειρουργικὴ διὰ τοῦ τέμνειν καὶ καίειν ὑγιάζει. Diog. Laert. in vita Platonis, p. 89.

* Sunt quædam noscitura impetrantibus, quæ non dare, sed negare beneficium est. *Senec. de benef. l.* 2. *c.* 16.

In a word, God is infinitely merciful and gracious, and sometimes treats us as we desire; and when he doth not so, nay when he most directly

rectly contradicts our own desires, he yet deals by us as we would desire, if we were but wise enough.

Which Observation, if rightly consider'd and applied, would not only silence all Murmurings and Complaints at the Divine Dispensations, but would dispose us all in our worst estate, readily to fly to God and put our trust in his Aid. How would it cause (to use the words of *Thophilus Antiochenus*, no less applicable to our present purpose than to his own) how would it cause that * the Husbandman should not more willingly commit his Seed to the Ground, or the Mariner commit himself to his Ship and his Pilot, or the Sick commit himself to the care of his Physician, or he that is to learn an Art or Trade, commit himself to his Teacher, than each one of us would commit himself to his God, having had so many sure tokens of his kindness to and care over him? It would be a mighty encouragement to rely upon God at all times, and in all places, and for all kinds of blessings, whether Spiritual or Temporal, National or Personal, for our selves or ours.

* Τίς γὰρ δύναται θερίσαι γεωργὸς, ἐὰν μὴ πρῶτον πιστεύσῃ τὸ σπέρμα τῇ γῇ· ἢ τίς δύναται διαπερᾶσαι τὴν θάλατταν, ἐὰν μὴ πρῶτον ἑαυτὸν πιστεύσῃ τῷ πλοίῳ καὶ τῷ κυβερνήτῃ; τὶς δὲ κάμνων δύναται θεραπευθῆναι ἐὰν μὴ πρῶτον ἑαυτὸν πιστεύσῃ τῷ ἰατρῷ; ποίαν δὲ τέχνην ἢ ἐπιστήμην δύναται, τίς μαθεῖν, ἐὰν μὴ πρῶτον ἐπιδῷ ἑαυτὸν καὶ πιστεύσῃ τῷ διδασκάλῳ εἰ οὖν γεωργὸς πιστεύει τῇ γῇ, καὶ ὁ πλέων τῷ πλοίῳ, καὶ ὁ κάμνων τῷ ἰατρῷ· σὺ οὐ βούλει σεαυτὸν πιστεῦσα τῷ θεῷ, τοσούτους ἀῤῥασῶνας ἔχων παρ' αὐτοῦ. Ad Autol. l. 1.

The truth is, this one single Consideration of Providence in general, that God governs the World, and seeing he doth not overlook the Wants of any the meanest of his Creatures, but is ready to make a due provision for them, he cannot possibly be supposed to be regardless of Mankind,

Mankind, who have a more peculiar Relation to himſelf; this one Conſideration, I ſay, if rightly attended to, were a cogent Argument for engaging us *to caſt our Care upon him in all Caſes*, with a confident Expectation of his Protection, even under our moſt preſſing Fears or Sufferings.

SECT. II.

II. HOwever, for our greater encouragement herein, I proceed further to conſider, Secondly, *The peculiar offers of Mercy and Protection that are made in Scripture to the Righteous, whereby they have an eſpecial aſſurance given them, that the Almighty will watch over them for good, and will never ſuffer them to be moved.* For though Mankind in general are invited to depend continually upon him, from that good Providence, which he daily exerciſes over the ſeveral parts of the World, they that have heartily laboured to ſerve and honour him have far greater reaſon to do it, as becauſe of the love he bears to them that fear him, ſo likewiſe upon the account of the many gracious Promiſes he hath been pleaſed to make to ſuch, that he will not permit them to be overwhelm'd by any Troubles or Calamities, but will either keep them all off from them, or will enable them to bear up againſt thoſe that ſhall befall them. His unſpeakable bowels of Compaſſion will provoke him to hearken to the Cries of any who are intirely devoted to his ſervice, and how deaf ſoever he may be to others who have leſs pretence to his Favour, theſe ſhall not be rejected by him. If they with Faith and Humility diſplay their wants

wants before him, and whenever they find themselves in streights, if they presently make their applications to him, hoping for safety from him alone, he has declared, * That their Prayers shall not return without effect, but shall find him readily disposed to attend to them.

* Psal. 50. 15. S. Ja. 5. 16. 1 S Jo. 5.14,15.

So that Storms may arise, and Dangers threaten them, Fears may surprize, Losses and other Disasters may alarm them; yet none of these shall be able to make them miserable; for they are in the hands of a most affectionate Father, who is heartily desirous of their welfare, and has accordingly declared for their comfort, That he will in a particular manner take care of them, and will be with them in their Necessities, sometimes to save them from Dangers, and at others both to uphold them under, and bring them out of any Affliction he sees fit to lay upon them.

And though † whilst we remain in this present state, and carry mortal Bodies about us, and have need of temporal good things for our support, and converse with a treacherous and ill-natur'd World, it is not to be expected but that even the very best of Men will be liable to Sickness and Diseases, Losses and Disappointments, and the rest of those Troubles, to which (as *Eliphaz* the *Temanite* professes, and each one's daily Experience shews) ‖ *Man is* as naturally *born as the Sparks fly upward*, this hinders not but that the good Man's share of these Troubles may be considerably less than he would otherwise have met with; and that when

† Εἰ σὲ ὡς ἄνθρωπον σκοπεῖς, νῦν μὲν σοὶ νοσῆσαι καθήκει, νῦν δὲ πλεῦσαι, καὶ κινδυνεῦσαι, νῦν δὲ ἀπορηθῆναι. Πρὸ ὥρας τεςὶν ὅτε ἀποθανεῖν. Arr. Epictet. l. 2. c. 5. Οὐκ εὐβίον ὡρεῖν ἄλυτον ἐν ὀδενὶ. Diversorum γνωμ. Ὁ γ' ὃν Εὐριπίδης λέγει. Ἔφυ μὲν ὀδεὶς ὅςις ὀ πονεῖ βροτῶν, &c. Clem. Alex. Str. l. 4.

‖ Job 5. 7.

when they do come, they may both be the more tolerable, and he may the easier get rid of them.

And indeed it is very reasonable to suppose, that he who is so munificent as to bestow continual Blessings though where the Severities of his Wrath are justly due, and who many times gives a plentiful portion in this World, to such who shall have eternal Vengeance allotted them in the World to come, will much rather watch over his own Children, to comfort and encourage them in the ways of Holiness, and so convince them from their observation, that even in relation to this present life, it is not in vain to serve the Lord. Such is the Affection he bears to them that fear him, that he cannot but find himself inclined to take pity upon them, when in the anguish of their Souls they make their Complaints to him. And whereas there are but three ways wherein they are capable of relief against Sufferings and Afflictions, either by Preservation from them, or support under them, or Deliverance out of them, he has therefore given his word, that he will be helpful to them in each of these respects, that either his Judgments shall not overtake them; or if they do, they shall neither prevail against them, nor continue longer upon them, than may make for his Glory and their own Advantage, either in this or in the other World; as I come now to prove.

1. And that he will be mindful of the Righteous to protect them from Evils, may be collected, amongst many other passages in Scripture, from those words of the *Psalmist*, * *Blessed is he that considereth the poor and needy, the Lord will deliver him in the time of trouble. The Lord will preserve* * Ps. 41. 1, 2.

preſerve him and keep him alive, and he ſhall be bleſſed upon earth, and thou wilt not deliver him into the will of his Enemies. * And thoſe other, *Surely he ſhall deliver thee from the Snare of the Fowler, and from the noiſome Peſtilence; he ſhall cover thee with his Feathers, and under his Wing ſhalt thou truſt, his Truth ſhall be thy Shield and Buckler. Thou ſhalt not be afraid for the terrour by Night, nor for the arrow that flieth by Day. A thouſand ſhall fall at thy ſide, and ten thouſand at thy right hand, but it ſhall not come nigh thee. Only with thine Eyes ſhalt thou behold and ſee the Reward of the Ungodly.* Together with that profeſſion of the Wiſeman, who having been ſpeaking of Wiſdom, that is, of the fear of God, and having declared what ſhall be the deplorable condition of thoſe that regard her not, concludes with the great benefit of attending to her Counſel, † *Whoſo hearkeneth unto me ſhall dwell ſafely, and ſhall be quiet from fear of evil.* Whereby he gives us to underſtand, that ſuch ſhall be ſtill, and poſſeſs what they have in peace, when the wicked who are out of God's Favour come to ruine. Nay, they ſhall not ſo much as be diſturbed with the fear of Miſchief, but may reſt ſecure of a watchful Providence over them for their good, how many ſoever may be the Miſeries of the Ungodly. ‖ And *who is he*, ſaith St. *Peter, that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?* As much as to ſay, *You need not fear that any will do it, for whilſt you faithfully diſcharge your duty in purſuing that which is good, you may reaſonably expect to be preſerved (as from other evils, ſo particularly) from the malice of your moſt outrageous Adverſaries, that they ſhall either be content to let you live in quiet, or elſe, that*

* Pſ. 91. 3, &c.

† Prov. 1. 33.

‖ Eph. 3. 13.

that all their miſchievous Deſigns againſt you ſhall prove abortive. This is the firſt ſort of Security that God has promiſed to the Righteous, That he will preſerve them from Evils.

2. He will ſupport them under any Evils that befall them, ſo as that if they cannot eſcape Afflictions, they may however be enabled to endure them, with ſo little concernment, and with that Courage and Alacrity, that they may appear to be powerfully armed againſt them. Agreeably to this ſence the holy *Pſalmiſt* proclaims, that he had innumerable perplexing Thoughts and anxious Cares, that had extreamly diſcompoſed him, yet he no ſooner reflected upon the Divine Attributes, and began to taſte the Comforts that hence ariſe to Mankind, but they all vaniſh'd, and he ſuddenly felt an alteration in his Soul, and his dejected Spirits were preſently revived. * *In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy Comforts have refreſhed my Soul.* But in the 37th *Pſalm* † he is more expreſs, ſaying, *The ſteps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, and he delighteth in his way. Though he fall he ſhall not be utterly caſt down, for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand.* Now God *upholds* and ſupports Men under Sufferings, partly by the gracious Promiſes that are to be met with in Scripture for their Conſolation, both of his Preſence with them in this World, and of thoſe incomparable Glories for which they are deſigned in a future ſtate; and farther by the aſſiſtance of his holy Spirit, quickening their Graces, and encreaſing their Strength, and hereby preparing them to bear up chearfully in times of Affliction. Which he did to a very extraordinary degree in the Apoſtles and firſt Diſciples of our Lord, inſpiring

* Pſ. 94. 19.

† v. 33, 34.

them with that wonderful Magnanimity and Constancy amidst their heaviest pressures, that *when they were troubled on every side*, S. *Paul* enforms us, * *That they were not yet distressed*, though they were *perplexed, yet not in despair*; they were *persecuted, but not forsaken, were cast down, but not destroyed*. And at other times we read how they rejoiced, that they † *were accounted worthy to suffer for our Saviour's name*, and were so little afraid of Persecutions, and Death it self, that they could willingly undergo the utmost Cruelties rather than either renounce or dishonour the holy Religion they were sent forth to propagate. And although the numerous difficulties whereto they were appointed, required a much greater measure of the Divine Assistance than is usually to be hoped for, yet need we not doubt of a proportionable support, if we but seriously labour after it. For what S. *Paul* speaks to the *Philippians* is of more general influence, and concerned not the first Disciples only, but all Christians without distinction, requiring the same Duty of all according to their Circumstances, and propounding the same Encouragement to all according to their needs. ‖ *Be careful*, saith the Apostle, *for nothing, but in every thing by Prayers and Supplications with Thanksgivings, let your requests be made known unto God, and then the peace of God which passeth all understanding, shall keep your Hearts and Minds in Christ Jesus.*

* 2 Cor. 4. 8, 9.

† Act. 5. 45.

‖ Phil. 4. 6.

As likewise what the same Apostle saith at another time, if rightly applied, may be a means of no small comfort to all afflicted Christians, though in an especial manner to any who are called to suffer for God and his Cause. * *My Grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect*

* 2 Cor. 12. 9.

perfect in weakneſs. Eſpecially, if to this be added another Aſſertion of the ſame Apoſtle, profeſſing, that * *God is faithful, who will not ſuffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation alſo make a way to eſcape, that we may be able to bear it.* Which brings me to the other Particular implied in God's Promiſes of Protection to the Righteous, that * 1 Cor. 10 13.

3. He will deliver them from thoſe Evils, which poſſibly may for the preſent lie heavy upon them. He may permit them for a while to labour under Preſſures and Diſturbances, for the trial of their Faith, or the exerciſe of their Patience, or the mortification of their Luſts, or the quickening their Devotions, or to teach them how to value his Mercies when they have them, or to humble them under a ſenſe of their own Weakneſs and Inſufficiency, or to wean their Affections from this Life and its Enjoyments, and put them upon a diligent preparation for a better, or for whatſoever other wiſe Purpoſe and Deſign (as I ſhall ſhew † hereafter) but when he doth it, they have this for their encouragement, that he will ſet them again at eaſe, ſo ſoon as his End is obtained, and a Deliverance will be a real Kindneſs to them. For not only the Apoſtle S *Peter* teaches, that ‖ *the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation*, but God Almighty himſelf, by the Mouth of the *Pſalmiſt* invites to addreſs our ſelves to him for relief from all our Sorrows, with hopes of a gracious anſwer from him. * *Call upon me in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee, and thou ſhalt glorifie me.* † Chap. 4. Sect. 2. ‖ 2 S Pet. 2. 9. * Pſ. 50. 15.

And the ſame *Pſalmiſt*, upon another occaſion, proclaims from his own Experience, what ſingular Intereſt he had obſerved good Men to have in the

Divine Protection. * *The Righteous cry, and the Lord heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles. The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart, and will save such as be of a contrite spirit. Many are the afflictions of the Righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of all. He keepeth all his bones, not one of them is broken. Evil shall slay the wicked, and they that hate the Righteous shall be desolate. The Lord redeemeth the Soul of his Servants, and none of them that trust in him shall be desolate.* Here is a plain Declaration of God's concern for those that faithfully *cast their Care upon him*, together with a full and free Promise of his Protection, that he is and will be their Keeper, and they shall not be destitute of help, be the troubles that encompass them never so many.

* Ps. 34. 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22.

And thus I have instanced in some few of those many Texts of Scripture, which might have been urged, to prove, That God will have an especial regard to them that love, and fear, and put their trust in him, and will in his wise Providence so over-rule natural Causes and Events, as † that *all things shall* be made to *work together for their good.*

† Rom. 8. 28.

I grant, that these forementioned, or other the like Expressions in Scripture, do not import, that good Men are to meet with no Troubles or Afflictions, whilst they remain in this World, and partake of the same nature with other Men, and according to the ordinary course of things are in some respects, and especially at some times more exposed to them than others, and have ever and anon great need of them. For to affirm this, were not only to contradict each one's daily Experience, and all those Promises of

support

ſupport under Sufferings, which plainly ſuppoſe the beſt of Men liable to ſtand in need of this Support, and conſequently obnoxious to thoſe Sufferings which call for it; but beſides, it were to reflect upon Almighty God, as if he had not that regard for our welfare, which he has declared himſelf to have. And we are not therefore to perſuade our ſelves, that he will never permit his faithful Servants to endure any kind of Afflictions, though never ſo neceſſary and expedient; but only that he will conſider their condition, and will not let them groan under more and heavier Calamities than he knows to be uſeful for them. For to keep them from neceſſary Sufferings, is not a favour to them, but may prove a very great diskindneſs, and cannot therefore be the meaning of thoſe many profeſſions which he makes from time to time, of this willingneſs to take care of them Thus much then, and no more, we may conclude from theſe and the like Declarations of God's concern for them that conſcientiouſly ſerve and depend upon him, that he will take continual care of them, and will give them as much eaſe and quiet as is agreeable to their Circumſtances, as much eaſe from Sufferings, and as much quiet under them.

* And what great matter is it, whether of theſe two be our portion? whether we be wholly kept from Sufferings, or be enabled to bear them comfortably? whether we have Riches, or be taught to live contentedly without them? whether we be honoured or diſgraced if we can welcome either condition? and whether

* Divitiæ quippe atq; faſtigia dignitatum, cæteraq; hujuſmodi quibus ſe fœlices eſſe putant mortales veræ illius fœlicitatis expertes, quid afferunt conſolationis, cum ſit eis non indigere quàm eminere præſtantius? *D. Auguſt. Ep.* 121. *c.* 2.

we be healthy and strong, if we can but be as happy as those that are? A great part of our Troubles proceed only from our own Fancies and Apprehensions of things; and others are much heightened or diminished by them. And if we can but conquer our selves so far as not to be rufled and discomposed at the Inconveniencies we meet with, our Case may be much better than many others, who abound in the things we most want, but are uneasie in their own Minds.

Wherefore if Almighty God condescend by the influence of his holy Spirit thus graciously to prepare us for Sufferings, we need not be dismay'd, though the World frown never so much upon us, and we have never so cross a passage through it. Who could think the first professors of our Faith miserable, when they meet with those Tribulations their Saviour had forewarned them of, and yet were not only patient under them, but could rejoice at, and glory in them? or * those later Martyrs, who could profess in the midst of their Flames, That they felt themselves as upon a Bed of Down or of Roses, could embrace and welcome the Stake, and shew other tokens of joy to the Beholders? Not much unlike what *Socrates* relates of one *Theodorus*, † who being tormented with sundry kinds of punishments, and wounded all over his Body, and then dismissed because he was thought to be past all possibility of recovery; yet being, through the Goodness of God, restored to his former Health, acquainted *Ruffinus*, that his Pains were not like

* *Henry Voes* and *John Esch*, went joyfully and merrily to the place of Execution, and joyfully embraced the Stake, and one of them seeing the Fire was kindled at his Feet, said, *Methinks you do straw Roses under my Feet.* Fox's Acts and Monuments, Vol. 2. p. 102.

James Bainham, at his Execution, protested, *That in the Fire he felt no more pain, than if he had been in a Bed of Down; that it was to him as a Bed of Roses* p. 301.

Anthony Pearson, with a chearful Countenance,

like what the Beholders imagined, for that there ſtood by him a certain young Man who wiped away his Sweat, and ſtrengthened his Soul, and made his Sufferings a pleaſure to him rather than a puniſhment. And if they, inſtead of complaining of their hard, their fiery-tryal, ſeemed rather to be pleaſed with, and delighted in it, what reaſon can our ſelves have to be afraid of leſſer Evils, whilſt our God is ready by his Almighty Power, either wholly to preſerve us from them, or at leaſt to prevent their ſmart, and take away their pungency that they ſhall not hurt us? And that this is not a vain hope, but what we have abundant encouragement to depend upon, is ſo evident, that none who is but tolerably verſed in the holy Scriptures can have the leaſt pretence to doubt of it.

embraced the Poſt in his Arms, and kiſſing it, ſaid likewiſe, *Welcome mine own ſweet Wife, for this day ſhalt thou and I be married together in the love and peace of God.* p. 554.

Henry Filmer ſaid to *Pearſon* and *Teſtwood* his fellow-ſufferers, *Be merry, my Brethren, and lift up your Hands unto God, for after this ſharp Breakfaſt, I truſt we ſhall have a good Dinner in the Kingdom of Chriſt our Lord and Redeemer.* p. 555.

Lawrence Saunders took the Stake to which he ſhould be chained in his Arms, and kiſs'd it, ſaying, *Welcome the Croſs of Chriſt, welcome Everlaſting Life.* Vol. III. p. 144.

Thomas Hawkes, when his Speech was taken away by the violence of the Flame, his Skin alſo drawn together, and his Fingers conſumed in the Fire, ſo that now all Men thought certainly he was gone, ſuddenly, and contrary to all expectation —— reached up his Hands, burning on a light fire —— over his Head, to the Living-God, and with great rejoicing, as ſeem'd, ſtrook or clapp'd them three times together. p. 266.

Mr. *Bradford* took a Faggot in his Hand and kiſſed it, and ſo likewiſe the Stake. p. 307.

See the like alſo of *T. Thomkins* (p. 187, 188, 189.) Bp *Farrar* (p. 216.) Mr. *Denley* (p. 396.) *Spicer*, *Demy* and *Pool* (p. 704.) and others.

Beati Martyres noſtri, *Hus* & *Hieronymus*, in mediis flammis cantabant hymnos Deo. *Jo. Comenii Paræneſ. ad Eccleſias, nominatim Anglicanam*, p. 122.

Eos inter qui necati ſunt, vidimus puerulum ſex vel ſeptem annorum, qui tanto animi gaudio geſtiens, prædicans, & cantans Chriſtianos Pſalmos Japonico ſermone ad mortem præparabat, ut in tali ætate mirati id valdè ſimus. *Varen. de religione in regnis Japon. c.* 11.

† Socrat. Hiſt. Eccleſ. l. 5. c. 19.

I confess God may, and often doth suffer wicked Men to proceed in their Iniquities for a long time together, and perhaps without any visible harm attending them; but his Patience and Clemency to these is no sign that he puts not a real difference betwixt such and those that are heartily intent upon the observance of his Will, or that he is not much more concerned for the one than he is for the other. For that he is so, the Wise-man assures us, delivering it as a Truth of which he had sufficiently enformed himself, and which we may therefore certainly depend upon. * *Though a sinner do evil a hundred times, and his years be prolonged, yet surely I know it shall be well with them that fear the Lord, which fear before him.* It shall be well with them, in as much as besides the advantage they have an of inward Tranquility, Peace, and Satisfaction of Mind under all Events, they are moreover entitled to an Interest in the Divine Providence, which gives them just grounds to look that even their greatest crosses shall be turned to their benefit. And of this the holy *Psalmist* was so fully satisfied, that a great part of this Book of *Psalms* is spent in declaring his sense of it. † *The Lord*, saith he, *is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?* ‖ *In the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavillion, in the secret of his Tabernacle shall he hide me, he shall set me up upon a Rock.* * *Truly my Soul waiteth upon God, from him cometh my Salvation; he only is my Rock, and my Salvation; he is my Defence, I shall not be greatly moved.* † *I will sing of thy power, yea I will sing aloud of thy Mercy in the Morning: for thou hast been my defence and refuge in the day*

* Eccles. 8. 12.

† Psal. 27. 1.

‖ v. 5.

* 62. 1, 2.

† 59. 16, 17.

of

of my trouble. Unto thee, O my ſtrength, will I ſing; for God is my defence, and the God of my mercy. * *The Lord alſo will be a refuge for the oppreſſed, a refuge in times of trouble. And they that know thy name will put their truſt in thee: for thou Lord haſt not forſaken* (or as it is in our old Tranſlation, *haſt never failed*) *them that ſeek thee.* † *I will love thee, O Lord, my ſtrength. The Lord is my rock, and my fortreſs, and my deliverer: my God, my ſtrength in whom I will truſt, my buckler, and the horn of my Salvation, and my high Tower.* ‖ *In God is my Salvation and my Glory, and the rock of my ſtrength, and my refuge is in God.* With multitudes of other like expreſſions. Nor doth he only proclaim his own confidence in God, but invites others alſo to the like. *Truſt in him at all times; ye people pour out your heart before him, God is a refuge for us.* And affirms moreover for their encouragement, That * *the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him; upon them that hope in his mercy; to deliver their ſoul from death, and to keep them alive in famine.* And again, ſaith he, † *The poor man cried, and the Lord heard him; and ſaved him out of all his troubles. The Angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them. O taſte and ſee that the Lord is good; bleſſed is the man that truſteth in him. O fear the Lord, ye his Saints; for there is no want to them that fear him. The young Lions do lack and ſuffer hunger:* (or as theſe words are render'd in the *Septuagint*, οἱ πλούσιοι ἐπλάγησαν, *the rich are impoveriſhed and brought to beggary*) *but they that ſeek the Lord ſhall not want any good thing.*

* 9. 9, 10.

† 18. 1, 2.

‖ 62. 7.

* 33. 18, 19.

† 34. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10.

But I forbear to multiply Texts of Scripture in

in so clear a case, and shall choose rather to make some Reflexion upon what I have hitherto been discoursing, and so proceed to my next Head. And to this end I come to sumn up and apply what hath been offered, in these following Corollaries.

Wherefore, supposing us to be of the number of those to whom the Promises of God are made, such as are careful to please and honour him, and are ready *to cast their Care upon him*, (for to such only this Argument is directed;) supposing us, I say, to be thus qualified,

1. We may hence inferr for our Consolation in all Conditions, that whatever our estate be, how dangerous, or how dolorous soever, we need never question a deliverance if it be for our good to be deliver'd. For that we cannot be mistaken in this is manifest in that our gracious God
* Num. 23. 19. has passed his word for it; and * *that he is not as man that he should lye, or as the Son of man that he should repent; hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?* His Faithfulness is engaged on our behalf, and he will so certainly fulfill what he has undertaken, that it is impossible he should do otherwise. † *Heaven and Earth*, we may assure our selves, *shall sooner pass away, than one jot or tittle shall fail*, of all that is gone out of his mouth. For ‖ *all his promises are Yea and Amen*; they are unquestionably true, and shall in his due time be infallibly made good to all that don't incapacitate themselves for them.

† S. Matt. 24. 35.

‖ 2 Cor. 1. 20.

2. And therefore, if at any time we be not delivered according to our expectation, we ought to do both God and our selves the right to believe, that it is then best for us that we should not,

not, * it being out of love to us that God is pleaſed to deny us our Requeſts, becauſe he ſees them not proper to be granted us. This is a natural deduction from the former, and which cannot be queſtioned without impeaching the Divine Veracity, as though he who is Truth it ſelf, and can no more deceive than he can be deceived, would not be mindful to perform his Promiſes. For one of theſe two Conſtructions muſt neceſſarily be made, of God's ſuffering the Righteous to be at any time in a ſtate of Affliction, either that he doth not watch over them according to his word, or elſe that it is out of kindneſs to them that he lets them be in this condition. And ſince the former of theſe is by no means to be imagined concerning a God of infinite Mercy and Truth, the other therefore muſt be owned as the true cauſe of their Grievances, namely, that God in his infinite Wiſdom obſerves it to be for their benefit, that they be expoſed to Tryals and outward Inconveniencies. And by conſequence, they ought in this caſe to reſt ſatisfy'd, that though themſelves do not, yet God Almighty certainly knows the denying their Requeſts will be a greater favour to them, than the granting them would be. Whence again we may obſerve,

3. What Opinion we ought to have of our Afflictions, namely, that we are to look upon them as the neceſſary Chaſtiſements of an Indulgent Parent, who would not ſend them unleſs our Caſe called for them, and who will however be ready to turn them into Bleſſings to us, if we but mind to bear them as we ought. And if he let us lie under them only at ſuch times when they may be advantageous to us, inſomuch that it

* Si aliquid contra quàm oramus accidérit.--- hoc potius oportuiſſe quod Dei, non quod noſtra voluntas habuit, minimè dubitare debemus. *D. Auguſt. Epiſt.* 121. *c.* 14.

it is best for us not to be delivered from them, what monstrous undutifulness and ingratitude must it be to complain of this tender usage? Considering how little reason there is for any kind of dissatisfaction upon this account, we should be prepared rather to bless, and praise, and magnifie our gracious God, for vouchsafing us these seasonable Medicines for the cure of our distempered Souls. We might very well resolve to be patient and contented under the sorest Troubles that God at any time thinks fit to bring us into, upon the account of that support we may justly hope for from him, whilst they are suffered to lie upon us. But we should be even ready to rejoice in them, when we call to mind the good that may redound to us from them, if not prevented by our own imprudence. We should *look both at the rod, and him that hath appointed it*, and instead of murmuring and repining at any of our Heavenly Father's Visitations, should on the other hand, heartily admire his unspeakable Compassion, all whose utmost Severities to his Children are not without a great deal of love and tenderness of Affection. Which being so, we may again see from hence, as the result of all,

4. What signal encouragement we have to the ready perf. rmance of this Duty I am treating of, of putting our Trust in God. For if God chastise us not but for our good, if he consults our welfare, not only when he bestows this World's Blessings upon us, but when he withdraws them from us likewise, and not only when he loads us with outward good things, but even when his hand lies heaviest upon us, if in all his Dispensations of whatsoever nature he intend our benefit, what folly may be compared to theirs,

theirs, who will not be perſuaded to commit themſelves to the care of ſo benign, ſo gentle, and affectionate a Lord, who both knows what is fitteſt for them, and is always ready to diſpoſe of them accordingly? And what abundant reaſon have we therefore heartily to rejoice at the thoughts of ſo compaſſionate a Protector, and to fly to him for ſhelter in all our ſtreights? As we can never be happy without his Favour, how large a ſhare ſoever we have of the things of this life; ſo, on the contrary, there is no danger of being miſerable, ſo long as he undertakes to provide for us, whatſoever either Dangers may threaten, or Troubles, or Misfortunes may befall us. Which is ſuch an encouragement to a continual Dependance upon him, that we muſt be wretchedly wanting to our ſelves, and to our Intereſt as well as our Duty if we be yet backward to repoſe our Truſt in him.

I ſhall conclude this Argument in the words of a certain devout Author of our own. * *He is no good Chriſtian that thinks he can be ſafe without God, or not ſafe with him. Never any Man was a loſer by his God, or left in danger and ſtood to him. What cannot God do when he will! what will he not do where he loves? O God they do not know thee that diſtruſt thee!*

* Preparation to a holy Life, p. 151.

SECT. III.

III. THE laſt Conſideration I propounded to ſpeak to for evincing the certainty of God's continual care of us, and the reaſon we therefore have upon this account to perſiſt in a conſtant dependance upon him was *of our own Experience of former Mercies, and Deliverances*

rances afforded both to our selves and others. And one would think we should all be heartily asham'd, to distrust God's Goodness any longer, when we recollect what pleasure he hath hitherto taken in dispensing his Favours amongst those who have sought to him in their Necessities.

Now if we look back to the People of the *Jews*, it were easie to present the Reader with a long Catalogue of unparallell'd Mercies bestowed upon them, and Deliverances wrought for them from time to time, * *The Miracles that God did for them in* Egypt, *and his wonders in the field of* Zoan; *how he turned their waters into blood, so that they could not drink of the rivers; he sent lice among them and devoured them up, and froggs to destroy them; he gave their fruit unto the caterpiller, and their labour unto the grashopper; destroyed their vines with hailstones, and their mulberry-trees with the frost; smote their cattel also with hailstones, and their flocks with hot thunderbolts; cast upon them the furiousness of his wrath, anger, displeasure and trouble; and sent evil Angels among them; he made a way to his indignation, and spared not their soul from death, but gave their life over to the pestilence; and smote all the first-born in* Egypt, *the most principal and mightiest in the dwellings of* Ham. *But as for his own people, he led them forth like sheep, and carried them in the wilderness like a flock; he brought them out safely, that they should not fear, and overwhelmed their enemies with the Sea; and brought them within the borders of his Sanctuary, even to his Mountain which he purchased with his right hand;* † *dividing the sea to let them go through, and making the waters to stand on an heap. He led them in the day time with a cloud, and all the night through with a light*

* Ps. 78. 43, &c.

† v. 13, 14, 15.

a light of fire. He clove the hard rocks in the wilderness, and gave them drink thereof, as if it had been out of the great depth. * *He commanded the clouds above, and opened the doors of heaven, and rained down Manna upon them (so that they ate Angels food) and flesh, as thick as dust, and feathered fowls like as the sand of the sea.* † *He cast out the heathen also before them, and caused their land to be divided among them for an heritage, and made the tribes of* Israel *to dwell in their tents.*

* v. 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28.

† v. 55.

Nor did his kindness cease here, but having by a long train of Miracles brought them to the promised *Canaan*, he was still with them in a very signal manner, during the whole time of their Oeconomy, raising them up Judges at the first to save them out of the hands of their Adversaries, and afterwards appointed them Kings to govern them, and sending his Prophets to make known his Will amongst them, multiplying them exceedingly, and setting them above the power of all their Enemies round about. It is a great Truth that *Minutius Felix* affirms concerning them, ‖ That *whilst they chastly, innocently, and religiously served God, walking in Obedience to the holy Precepts he had set before them, they continually grew and increased, of few becoming almost innumerable, of poor becoming wealthy, of Servants and Slaves becoming Masters and Governours, to the terror and astonishment of all who set themselves against them.* And though he plagued them for their Sins, when they dared to rebel against him, yet was he always ready to be reconciled to them upon their hearty Repentance, and to extend his wonted Favours to them.

‖ Nam & ipsi Deum nostrum (idem enim omnium Deus est) quamdiu castè, innoxiè, religioséque coluerunt, &c. p. 108.

Or

Or if from the *Jews* we descend to the first times of Christianity, it is well known, not only what Miracles were wrought by the Hands of the Apostles and other Disciples, but what others were wrought for them too; * how strangely one of them was saved from drowning, and † he and others had the Prison-doors opened, to release them from their Confinement; ‖ one was wonderfully converted in the heat of his fury, by an amazing light and a voice from Heaven, and afterwards * shook a Viper off from his Hand without any hurt, when it was expected by the Spectators that he should rather have *swollen and fallen down dead* suddenly, † another was brought alive out of a boyling Caldron of Oyl, and ‖ another at the time of his Martyrdom *saw the Heavens opened, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God*, for his comfort under his Sufferings. And after what manner, and to how great a degree the holy Spirit of God continued with the Christians afterwards, was abundantly evident (besides the Testimony of all their other Miracles) from the stupendious success their Religion met with in the World, in spight of all the Contrivances of both *Jews* and *Gentiles* for its Extirpation It was no mean token of God's care over them, that when * all the Powers on Earth conspired against them, when their Doctrine was hated and themselves despised, persecuted, and † condemned to the most dreadful Tortures, when both Men and Devils had set themselves against them, and they could expect nothing but Pains and Crosses here, and had their Hopes only in a good

* S. Matt. 14. 31.

† Act. 12. 7, 8. & 16. 26.

‖ c. 9. 3, 4.

* c. 28. 5.

† Tertul. de præscript. adv. Hær. c. 36.

‖ Act. 7. 55.

* Tot hostes ejus quot extranei. — Quotidiè obsidemur, quotidiè prodimur. *Tertul. Apol. c. 7.*

† Κεφαλοτομούμενοι, καὶ σταυρούμενοι, καὶ θηρίοις προβαλλόμενοι, καὶ δεσμοῖς, καὶ πυρὶ, καὶ πάσαις τῶν ἄλλαις βασάναις, ὅτι οὐκ ἀφιστάμεθα τῆς ὁμολο-

good God ſupporting them, and a glorious Reward promiſed them in a future ſtate, ſo that in outward appearance they were (as the Apoſtle ſpeaks) * *of all men moſt miſerable* in other reſpects; it was no mean token, I ſay, of God's care over them, that in theſe Circumſtances, and under all theſe Difficulties and Diſcouragements, ſuch poor illiterate perſons as were at firſt ſent out, ſhould be able to gain any conſiderable number of Proſelytes, and that in proceſs of time whole Nations ſhould be brought to embrace the ſame Profeſſion with them, not being at all affrighted, but animated rather by the variety of Cruelties they ſaw exerciſed upon others. Yet ſuch was the wonderful progreſs our Religion made in the World againſt all the diſadvantages it had to encounter with, till at length the † whole Empire became Chriſtian, the greateſt, the wiſeſt, the beſt of Men not being aſhamed to glory in the Croſs of *Chriſt*. Behold here the ſurprizing, the aſtoniſhing love of God, in condeſcending to take this care of his poor Creatures! and conſequently, the indiſſoluble obligation that lies upon us all to conſider theſe things, and be deeply affected with them, and mightily encouraged in a confident dependance upon him, whoſe goodneſs hath thus illuſtriouſly manifeſted it ſelf in behalf of them that have put their Truſt in him.

γίας, ſιλόν ἔστιν. Juſt. M. Dial. c. Tryph.

Ἡμῶν δ' ἀφθονοί μαρτύρων πηγαὶ ἐχέσης ἡμᾶς, ὰν ὀφθαλμοῖς ὑμῶν διωρύττωνται, παρρησιαζόμενοι, ἀναστηθλεύοντες, τὰς κεφαλὰς ἀποτεμνόμενοι. Clem. Alex. Strom. l. 2.

Innoxios, juſtos, Deo charos, domo privas, patrimonio ſpolias, &c. *D. Cypr. ad Demetr.*

Hoc verò inenarrabile eſt, quod fit adverſus eos qui male facere neſciunt, &c. *Lactant. Inſtit. l. 5. c. 9. Vid. etiam. c. 11. & Tertul. ap. c. 27. & c. 42.*

* 1 Cor 5. 19.

† Obſeſſam vociferantur civitatem, in agris, in caſtellis, in inſulis, Chriſtianos, omnem ſexum, ætatem, conditionem, etiam dignitatem tranſgredi ad hoc nomen. *Tertul. Apol. c. 1.* Veſtra omnia implevimus, *c. 37.* Quid facies de tantis millibus hominum, tot viris ac fœminis, omnis ſexus, omnis ætatis, omnis dignitatis. *Ad Scapulam.* Neq; enim civitates tantum, ſed vicos etiam atque agros ſuperſtitionis iſtius contagio pervagata

est. Plin. Epist. l. 10. ep. 97. Ἐχώδη ἡ ἀνὰ πᾶσαν τὴν οἰκουμένην, πόδων ἑλκόντων τὸ ὁμοῦ καὶ βαρβάρων, καὶ Ἑλλήνων, καὶ κώμας, καὶ πόλιν πᾶσαν, &c. Clem. Alex. Str. l. 6. Πᾶσα ἡ Ἑλλὰς, καὶ βάρβαρος ἡ καὶ τὴν οἰκουμένην ζηλωτὰς ἔχει μυρίους, &c. Orig. Philocal. c. 1.

But as the kindness and love of God was not confined to the Nation of the *Jews*, and the time of their Dispensation, so neither to the first Ages of the Christian Church; for if we enquire concerning these latter days, we shall soon find, that his Arm is not yet shortened, nor his Bowels of Compassion streightened, nor his loving Mercies abated, but he is the same God and Saviour, yesterday, to day, and for ever. * *He is ever rich and without envy*, as *Irenæus* speaks concerning him, *and gives more things than we can ask of him*, † *shewing himself full of Pity and Commiseration, and administring Safety even when Men are brought into peril of Death.*

* Præfat. in lib. 3.

† Fragment. p. 512.

And howsoever he may deal with others, I am very sure we of this Church and Nation have great reason *to praise him for his goodness, and loudly to declare the wonders that he doth for the children of men*, and whereof our selves in particular have had ample Experience. It cannot be denied that we are a very sinful People, the multitude of whose Iniquities hath highly provoked him to have cut us off long since, and *to have sworn in his wrath that we should never enter into his rest*, either here or hereafter, that we should neither continue the objects of his farther Care and Kindness in this World, nor be made partakers of a better after our translation hence. Whence we must needs own in relation to our selves, what *Salvian* affirms concerning the *Romans*, That whatever Miseries have at any time befallen us,

‖ De gubern. Dei, l. 6.

‖ *Non improvidentiâ nos Dei, atque neglectu, sed justitiâ,*

juſtitiâ, ſed judicio, ſed æquiſſimâ diſpenſatione, & digniſſimâ retributione toleraſſe, that it is not from any neglect in God, or want of his good Providence over us, that we have born them, but they are ſent us in Juſtice and Judgment, by a moſt equal Diſpenſation, and as the due reward of our Wickedneſſes.

And yet notwithſtanding all our Abominations, how freely has our merciful Lord made us to taſte of his bounty from Day to Day, and from Age to Age? We have abounded with ſtore of Bleſſings of all ſorts, both Spiritual and Temporal Bleſſings, Bleſſings for Soul and for Body, for this life and in order to a better. When we have been at our loweſt ebb he has not yet overlooked us, but has called to mind his wonted Compaſſion, and found out a way for our recovery; has had a regard for both Church and State, and for particular Perſons as well as the whole Community, to provide for all according to their Neceſſities and the Difficulties wherein they have been ſet. This muſt needs be acknowledged to God's Glory, and the ſhame of our ſelves his unworthy Creatures, who have made no better uſe of all his moſt gracious Diſpenſations towards us.

1. For if we look upon our ſelves as a National Church, and ſeriouſly lay to heart our ſingular happineſs in this reſpect, what People under Heaven can compare with us in it? We have a Religion purified from the Innovations, and delivered from the Encroachments of Popery on the one hand, and yet withall preſerved from thoſe Enthuſiaſtick Principles on the other, which have infected ſo many other parts of the Reformation. We are allowed the free uſe of

the holy Scriptures, and in a Language that we all understand, and have them recommended to our study, and expounded to us, and their Instructions pressed upon us by the best and most important Arguments for the orderly government of our Lives. We have the truly Orthodox Faith professed amongst us, that * *Faith which was once delivered to the Saints*, without the Superstructure of other Articles, unknown to all the purest Ages of Christianity; are Members of a Church that faithfully teaches our Duty to God, to the King as his Minister and Representative, to all other our regular and lawful Superiors, whether Civil or Ecclesiastical, and to each other in whatever capacity; and moreover have the ancient † Apostolical form of Episcopal Government preserved amongst us, and have an admirably pious and well-composed Liturgy, and only such innocent Ceremonies as are very becoming the service of God, and may tend rather to heighten than any way obstruct our Devotions. In short, it is our happiness to have been taught to reverence Antiquity, as the best Expositor of the Word and Will of God, and to depart no farther from any modern Churches than they appear to have departed from the truly Ancient and Catholick Church. And as we retain the same Form of Ecclesiastical Government that the Primitive Church had, and the same Principles upon which they retained it; so have we also our Worship ordered suitably to the Worship of the first and best Christians.

* S. Jud. 3.

† Meminisse autem Diaconi debent, quoniam Apostolos, id est, Episcopos & Præpositos Dominus elegit. *D. Cypr. Epist.* 3. Ad omnes Præpositos qui Apostolis vicariâ ordinatione succedunt. *Epist. 66. & alibi.*

And

And yet this is not all, for as we have been bleſſed with a Prudent and Orthodox Reformation, we have likewiſe been preſerved from the Attempts of thoſe who have ſought, either violently to overturn, or ſecretly to undermine it. We have had our Adverſaries on either hand endeavouring to ſupplant us, by various Artifices, as might ſuit beſt with their Circumſtances, and might ſeem moſt for their Intereſt, but bleſſed be God, they have not had their Ends upon us. Our gracious Lord hath often fruſtrated their Counſels, and brought their ſubtileſt Devices to nought, and hath from time to time (as we hope he will now again) put a period to our Deſtractions.

2. If we look upon our ſelves as Members of a lately flouriſhing Kingdom, we have great reaſon to be thankful alſo upon this account. We have been very ready to complain of our Abundance as a burden; ſuch plenty of worldly Bleſſings has been vouchſafed us. And what Plots and Contrivances have been on foot for our overthrow have generally proved abortive; and for the moſt part have fallen upon the Authors own Heads. It is true, we were ſuffered not very long ſince to prevail againſt our ſelves, till we had made an unhappy interruption of our Peace and Settlement for divers years together. Yet (behold the Goodneſs of our God) he then heard, at length, the cry of his diſtreſſed Servants, and reſtored quiet to our Land, together with all thoſe outward Comforts that uſually attend it. And ſince this, we may remember, that not many years agoe, ſcarce any part of *Europe* enjoyed ſo long and advantageous a Peace as we did, there being very few of our Neighbours who were not

embroyled in an expenſive War, whilſt we *ſate* * Mich. 4. 4. ſecurely (to uſe the Prophet's Expreſſion) * *under our own Vines, and under our own Fig-trees.* We grew wealthy and proud by theſe Advantages; and if it pleaſe God now to humble us under his afflicting Hand, this is no more than our abuſe of his former Mercies has too juſtly deſerved. And when by his Chaſtiſements he ſhall have fitted us for his more favourable Diſpenſations, it is to be hoped he will be graciouſly pleaſed to let us partake of them again as heretofore.

3. Or if again we look upon our ſelves in our private perſonal Capacity, who amongſt us can recount the abundant Goodneſs of God to him every day? We have in this reſpect likewiſe been honoured with ſtore of ſuch Bleſſings and ſuch Deliverances as may well fill our Hearts with Gratitude, and our Mouths with Songs of Praiſe to the God of our Salvation. † We are nothing, we have nothing, we can do nothing, nor be ſecure of any thing without his good Providence taking care of us; and to him therefore we are heartily to aſcribe the Honour and Glory, for all the Bleſſings we receive, and for all the Misfortunes and Evils we eſcape. And yet, oh! our gracious, our compaſſionate God, how boundleſs is thy Loving-kindneſs to us upon each of theſe accounts! Our Lives and Limbs, our Memory and Underſtanding, our Health and Strength, our Food and Raiment, and all the common Mercies we receive, we are too too apt to undervalue, becauſe of our ſo conſtant enjoyment of them; yet theſe are Bleſſings that they who want, or are about to loſe them, know how to

† Quoniam pravitas & fragilitas & inſufficientia noſtra ineſtabilis eſt, multaque nimis, ex parte noſtri ſumma requiritur gratitudo. *Dionyſ. Carthuſ. de vitâ ſpirituali Art.* 12.

to eſteem at a great rate. And how plentifully, I had almoſt ſaid, how inceſſantly are theſe continued to us? If we have now and then a reſtleſs Night, have we not many, very many good ones for it? If we have loſt one Child, or other dear Relation, how many more have we yet remaining? If we have been deprived of any other outward Enjoyment or Advantage, are not divers others continued to us, or elſe ſucceed in the room of what is loſt? Or if we have one Limb diſtorted, or in pain, or periſhed, are not all our other parts preſerved in health and good order? Or if our Condition be yet harder, if we have loſt an only Child, or have loſt our beſt Friends, upon whom poſſibly we had great dependance, or have loſt our whole Eſtate or Employment, or whatſoever we are wont to value moſt, or have our whole Body diſordered with Pains or Sickneſs, how hard ſoever our Lot may be in any one or more of theſe Particulars, are we not ſafe as to the reſt? Why then ſhould any amongſt us ſuffer his Wants or Diſappointments in one kind, to take away his ſenſe of the many other Favours that he yet enjoys? eſpecially ſeeing theſe are ordinarily many more, much greater, and more laſting?

Whereto, if I add the numerous Evils from which we are each day delivered (foraſmuch as we have no ſecurity that the next Houſe we come into ſhall not fall and bury us in its Ruines, the next bit of Meat we eat ſhall not choke us, the next breath of Air we take ſhall not breed ſome mortal Diſtemper in us, the next unruly Beaſt we meet with ſhall not prove our Executioner, but only from God's good Providence watching over us) and thoſe other more imminent dan-

gers, which we ever and anon narrowly escape, by Day and by Night, at Home and Abroad, by Sea and by Land, in War and in Peace, together with our divers recoveries from very dangerous and even desperate Diseases; I need say no more to evince the continuance of God's immense Goodness to our Church, our Nation, and our Selves, and the Care he daily takes of us.

And now, what return shall we make to the Lord for all his Mercies? shall we senselessly question his farther Loving-kindness? or shall we not rather fix our hope upon him, as our best defence in all times of difficulty and danger? A steady Dependance upon him for the future, is so naturally consequent upon a serious remembrance of his Protection hitherto, that nothing can excuse our want of it. Had he only promised to * *sustain men when they cast their burden upon him*, we ought certainly to have believed him; but when, besides his Promises of this nature, he hath actually wrought very powerfully in our behalf, this must necessarily be a very considerable aggravation of the sin of not heartily trusting in him. And the holy *Psalmist* therefore held himself concerned to make a very different use of this Reflection, not suffering himself to doubt any longer, whether God would condescend to supply his future wants, when he called to mind how largely he had already tasted of his Goodness.

* Psal. 50. 15.

† Ps. 3. 4, 5. † *I cried unto the Lord*, saith he, *with my voice, and he heard me out of his holy hill. I laid me down and slept, I awaked, for the Lord sustained me.* And now, behold the comfortable and dutiful result of this his Meditation in the next words, ‖ *I will not be afraid of thousands of the people that have set themselves against me round about.*

‖ v. 6.

bout. This was his ſupport, that how many, or how powerful ſoever his Enemies might be, the Lord who dwelleth on high, and who had hitherto been infinitely propitious to him, was mightier than them all by far; whoſe wonted Goodneſs had encouraged him to believe, that he ſhould not fail of being reſcued out of the hand of whomſoever that might riſe up againſt him. And at another time, * *The Lord*, ſaith he, *is my ſhepherd, I ſhall not want; He maketh me lie down in green paſtures, he leadeth me beſide the ſtill waters. He reſtoreth my ſoul, he leadeth me in the paths of righteouſneſs for his name's ſake.* And then it follows, *Though I walk through the valley of the ſhadow of death, I will fear no evil.* He could not think that God would ever ſuffer him to be overwhelmed with any kind of Miſery, ſince he had all along been thus gracious to him, and had made ſuch ample proviſion for him. And once more (to omit multitudes of other like paſſages in the Book of *Pſalms*) † *I called upon the Lord in diſtreſs, the Lord anſwered me, and ſet me in a large place. The Lord is on my ſide, I will not fear what man can do unto me. The Lord taketh my part with them that help me, therefore ſhall I ſee my deſire upon them that hate me.* Nor were theſe bare words, but his Practice was accordingly. For when he went forth to encounter the mighty *Goliah*, his Confidence was this, ‖ *The Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the Lion, and out of the paw of the Bear, he ſhall deliver me out of the hand of this Philiſtine.*

* Pſ. 23. 1, &c.

† Pſ. 118. 5, 6, 7.

‖ 1 Sam. 17. 37.

And the Apoſtle S. *Paul* makes the ſame Inference from the Conſideration of God's Mercy in the preſervation of himſelf and his Fellow-Diſciples,

Disciples, declaring how, when they were encompassed with many and dreadful terrours, which would otherwise have inevitably driven them past all hope of escaping, they found the remembrance of God's former Protection, a Cordial sufficient to bear up their Spirits, that they should not sink under the weight of the worst of Evils that might befall them, though it were even the cruellest sort of death. * *Who hath delivered us*, saith the Apostle, *from so great death, and doth deliver us, in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us.* And at another time he speaks to the same purpose, with a more particular respect to himself, and the success of his Doctrine. † *Notwithstanding the Lord stood by me and strengthened me, that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the* Gentiles *might hear*; *and I was delivered out of the mouth of the Lion, and the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work.*

* 2 Cor. 1. 10.

† 2 Tim. 4. 17, 18.

And thus ought every good Christian to encourage himself in his God, by calling to mind the many signal instances of his willingness to take care of himself, and others in their distress. A sense of his marvellous Loving-kindness both in this and other respects should engage persons faithfully to depend upon him, as their best security in the time of trouble. It should dispose us all to weigh seriously with our selves, how unequal a return it is for all his Favours, to let them slip out of our minds, and leave us in fear, least he should no longer take care of us. And accordingly we should rather argue thus with our selves: Whatsoever our present fears or troubles are, have we never known any in as bad a condition, whom God hath yet of his infinite Mercy delivered from it? Nay, possibly this may not be the first time that

that our ſelves have been reduced to theſe ſtreights, and yet at length the Storm has blown over, the Air cleared, and we have had a way made for our eſcape; and perhaps with that advantage that we have found our ſelves in better circumſtances than ever before; as Trees are ordinarily obſerved to ſettle the firmer, and take the better root for being ſhaken by the Winds, and a broken Limb when ſet again is generally reported to be ſtronger than if it never had been amiſs.

How then can we be ſo ungrateful, ſo undutiful to our merciful Deliverer, as to refuſe to put our Truſt in him ſtill? How ſhould we dread the thoughts of making no better a Return for all his exceſſive Loving-kindneſs: It were certainly a much properer courſe, more reverent and becoming in relation to Almighty God, and tending more to our own ſecurity, whatever we ſuffer, whatever we fear, whatever we have deſerved by our Sins, whatever ſorrows may either threaten, or have overtaken us, nevertheleſs *to remember the Compaſſion of the Lord, and the wonders he has wrought*, and as *to talk of his doings*, ſo moreover to make uſe of them for inviting both our ſelves and others, to a ſteady and unwearied dependance upon him. The conſideration hereof may ſerve to quicken our Devotions, and make us the more importunate ſuitors to Almighty God for relief againſt our Troubles, and may alſo engage us to offer up a hearty Sacrifice of Praiſe to him for all his Goodneſs; but it ſhould by no means ever ſuffer us to deſpair of a ſeaſonable redreſs from him, though in the moſt calamitous Condition.

It will be utterly impoſſible to queſtion, whether God can reſcue out of the greateſt Dangers

or

or Miseries, when we observe how miraculously and how frequently he has done it in all times past. And it will be highly unreasonable likewise, and intolerably disingenuous to distrust his favourable Inclinations after such abundant experience of his readiness to exercise his Bounty upon all occasions. And by consequence, we cannot but find our selves indispensibly obliged to make this use of his wonted Compassion, that we be encouraged constantly to *cast our Care upon him*, and under our greatest streights to look up to him for help, as well knowing that when all outward Comforts cease, he can easily supply the want of them, and that he will not fail to do it for them that seriously and dutifully fly to him for shelter.

Thus have I endeavoured to prove, That God Almighty never ceases to exercise a gracious Providence over the whole World, which, as it was at first produced, is also still preserved and governed by his Wisdom and Power, that he feeds the Beasts, and Fowls, adorns the Flowers of the Field, and takes care of Man to that degree, that our very Hairs are numbred by him, and no Evil can possibly befall any of us without his notice, or lie heavier than he sees fit, or last longer than he allows it; that besides the general Providence which he exercises over the Sons of Men, and the Plenty of Blessings he bestows indifferently upon both Good and Bad, he has farther condescended to promise a peculiar Protection to the Righteous, that he will watch over them in an especial manner, to secure them against the manifold Evils which might otherwise be in danger of overwhelming them; and again,

again, laſtly, That the Experience of all Ages ſhews how willing and ready he has been to fulfill theſe his Promiſes to the terrour and confuſion of his Enemies, and the ſafety and ſupport of all that have put their Truſt in him. And now what greater aſſurance would any one deſire of a good Providence continually preſiding over us? Or what can any conſidering perſon poſſibly inferr from hence, but that it muſt be our own fault, if we groan under any unneceſſary Calamity or Diſaſter, or if we want any ſuitable Good, ſince we are hence ſufficiently informed, that our God will never be backward to relieve us in either of theſe caſes, unleſs we ſenſelſly provoke him to it. We have all the Encouragement that can be deſired to rely upon him, upon the account of his readineſs to aſſiſt us when we do ſo. And if we but take care to approve our ſelves to him, and thereby entitle our ſelves to his Promiſes, there is no room left to imagine, that he will be wanting to us in any reſpect.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

The Usefulness of Casting all our Care upon God.

THE Fourth thing I undertook was, *To instance in some of the great Advantages that would accrue to us from a faithful and constant Dependance upon God.* That the Almighty has required this Duty at our Hands, and from time to time, and in such a manner as shews him nearly concerned for it, were Argument enough one would think to oblige all who desire either to please him here, or to be happy with him hereafter, to an uninterrupted Reliance upon him. And were the Duty thus enjoyned by him, never so difficult in it self, never so contrary to the natural Inclinations of Flesh and Blood, and were it perpetually attended with the most formidable Dangers, or heaviest Sufferings, yet being absolutely necessary, no good Christian but would conclude himself nearly concerned, to encounter all these inconveniencies, rather than expose himself to the just indignation of Almighty God. But if the case be quite of another nature, and this necessary Duty have none of those frightful Difficulties attending it, but be agreeable to the dictates of Reason, and for our Benefit in this life, as well as for the glory of God, and a means of our future Happiness, there remains no pretence of an excuse for the neglect of it. And that this

is

is the true ſtate of the matter, I hope I have already in a good meaſure made apparent, and ſhall now proceed to prove it more fully, by conſidering the Uſefulneſs of this Vertue, for theſe three following purpoſes;

1. For obtaining a greater Intereſt in the Divine Protection.
2. For quieting our Minds in all Conditions.
3. For Entitling to a better ſtate, when we ſhall be tranſlated hence.

SECT. I.

I. THIS Duty is of ſingular uſe *for obtaining a greater Intereſt in the Divine Protection.* For as to diſtruſt God, and not dare to rely upon him in times of Danger and Neceſſity, is the way to offend him, and by this means to have our likelieſt Undertakings miſcarry for lack of his Bleſſing; ſo on the contrary, there is no ſurer Expedient for compaſſing our juſt and lawful Ends, and promoting our own Welfare, than to ſeek an Intereſt in him by an undaunted Dependance upon his Providence, what our Saviour ſaith in another caſe, being applicable alſo to this, That * *to him who hath ſhall be given, and he ſhall have abundance, but from him that hath not, ſhall be taken away even that which he hath.* For if common Ingenuity teaches Men, that it is a great ſhame to prove falſe to the Truſt repoſed in them, much more will Almighty God eſteem it beneath his Divine Attributes, to ſlight any of his Servants that *caſt their Care upon him* in obedience to his own Command.

* S. Matt. 25. 29.

* We

* De cujus ope & pietate, qui in eum confidimus, possumus esse securi. *Epist.* 57.

† Psal. 55. 22.
‖ Τὸν μέριμνάν σε.
* יכלכלך
† Vid. לְכַלְכְּלָהּ 1 King. 17. 4. & לְכַלְכְּלָהּ v. 9. & c. 18. 4. כִּלְכַּלְתָּם & v. 13. אֲכַלְכְּלֵם
‖ Psal. 33. 18, 19.

* *We that trust in him*, saith S. *Cyprian*, *may be secure of his help.* And the holy *Psalmist* speaks to the same purpose, prescribing this as a never-failing qualification for the Divine Protection. † *Cast thy burden* (‖ thy Care or Solicitude, according to the *Septuagint*) *upon the Lord*, * *he will sustain thee*, he will † maintain thee, will provide for and nourish thee. He affirms ‖ *the eye of the Lord to be upon them that fear him, and put their trust in his Mercy, to deliver their soul from death, and to feed them in the time of dearth.* He proclaims him to be * *the Saviour of them that put their trust in him.* He urges it as an Argument for inclining Almighty God to hearken to him, and grant his Requests, that † his *trust* was stedfastly placed in him. He blesses himself in the security he found from his continual Dependance upon God to take care of him, ‖ whereby he was set above the danger of miscarrying. And again, he praises and admires the great Goodness of God which had been extended not to himself only and his Contemporaries, but to their Ancestors, who had left them many remembrances of his Mercy to such as had applied to him in their streights, and had been helped by him. They cried unto him and prevailed. They were confident he would be their Defender; and their hope had not made them ashamed. * *Our fathers trusted in thee, and thou didst deliver them. They cried unto thee, and were delivered; they trusted in thee and were not confounded.* From all which and divers other like passages in the Book of *Psalms*, it is easie to collect

* Psal. 17. 7.
† Ps. 7. 1. & 16. 1. & 25. 20. & 71. 1, &c.
‖ Ps. 26. 1.
* Ps. 22. 4, 5.

collect, that this Vertue ſhall not go without its Reward in this preſent life, beſides the unconceivable Recompence that ſhall be allotted it in the other.

It is a ſight highly pleaſing to God, to behold his poor Creatures ſenſible of their own inſufficiency and flying to him for ſhelter, and his Bowels are preſently moved towards them. And if their Caſe be preſſing, and themſelves lay no impediment in the way, he will find out a Method for their relief, as he did for * *Abijah* and the Men of *Judah*, who when the Army of the *Iſraelites* came upon them both before and behind, to have cut them off, obtained a Victory over them meerly by his Aſſiſtance, and *becauſe they relied upon the Lord God of their Fathers.* Becauſe they looked up to him in their Diſtreſs, as their beſt Safeguard againſt all their Fears and Dangers, and caſt themſelves wholly upon his Protection; this wiſe Behaviour of theirs engaged his Providence on their ſide, which therefore wrought much more ſucceſsfully for them than all their own Conduct, or Strength, or Courage could be ſuppoſed to have done. * 2 Chron. 13. 17, 18.

Thus it is recorded alſo of *Job*, that † when it had pleaſed God to bring him into a very low condition, having deprived him of his Children, and his Wealth, and his Health and ſoundneſs of Body, ſo that ‖ *he took a potſheard to ſcrape himſelf withall, and ſat down among the aſhes*, until * *he became a deriſion to them whoſe fathers he would have diſdained to ſet with the dogs of his flock*, as himſelf expreſſeth it: Still he was not diſcouraged, but profeſſes, that though † *God ſhould ſlay him, yet would he truſt in him*; though he were at the point of death, and had no ap- † Job 1. 14, &c. ‖ c. 2. 8. * c. 30. 1. † c. 13. 15.

pearance of recovery to depend upon, this should not make him cast away his Confidence in God, but he would still hope for good from him. And behold the wonderful effect of this his reso-

* c. 42. 10. lute affiance in God, * *The Lord turned the captivity of* Job, *and gave him twice as much as he*

† v. 16. *had before.* And † *after this he lived an hundred and forty years, and saw his sons, and his sons sons, even four generations.*

Another very remarkable Instance we have to this purpose, in the three *Jewish* Captives, who with undaunted boldness declared before King *Nebuchadnezzar*, what assurance they had that

‖ Dan. 3. 17. God would rescue them out of his hand. ‖ *Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O King.* Which confident Assertion of theirs was soon after verified to his great astonishment, when the more effectually to defeat their Expectation, he had commanded them to be cast into the burning Furnace, and burning in

* v. 19, 20. a very unusual manner, * being purposely heated seven times more than it was wont to be upon other occasions; but presently he beheld them

† v. 25. † *walking in the midst of the fire, without any manner of hurt*, and the Angel of God with them. And when they came out, it was visible

‖ v. 27. to the King and all his Courtiers, ‖ *That the fire had no power upon their bodies, nor was an hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor had the smell of fire passed on them.* So miraculously did the Goodness of God exert it self for their Deliverance.

But not to insist upon particular Instances, the Son of *Syrach* appeals for the proof of this Truth to the Experience of many Ages, directing to

* *look*

* *look at the generations of old, and ſee, did ever any truſt in the Lord, and was confounded? or did any abide in his fear and was forſaken, or whom did he ever deſpiſe that called upon him?* Which direction, whoſoever duly follows, will find no difficulty in aſſenting to the following words, that † *the Lord is full of mercy and compaſſion, long-ſuffering and very pitiful, and forgiveth ſins, and ſaveth in time of affliction*, and that *as his Majeſty is great, ſo is his Mercy*. He has always been mindful of them that have fled to him in their diſtreſs, and been ready to proportion his Aſſiſtance to their affiance in him.

* Eccluſ. 2. 10.

† v. 11.

In like manner, when *Maximin* the Tyrant had made a Vow to *Jupiter*, That if he got the Victory over *Licinius*, he would utterly extinguiſh the Chriſtian Name, and came on fluſhed with hopes of an eaſie Conqueſt, and with a full expectation of putting this impious and bloody Deſign in execution, upon the earneſt Prayers of *Licinius* and his Army ‖ begging of God to be their Saviour and Protector, aſcribing all their Power to him, and humbly recommending their Safety and their Empire to him, and when their General had tried to perſuade the Tyrant to a peaceable accommodation, but to no purpoſe, his mighty Army was ſoon overthrown by a very unequal number of theſe Supplicants, and himſelf forced to fly for his life, and thenceforward he found all his attempts to regain his former Station in vain; till being at length ſeiz'd with ſevere pains, even to diſtraction, and having loſt his ſight; in this miſerable

‖ Summe Deus, te rogamus. Omnem juſtitiam tibi commendamus, ſalutem noſtram tibi commendamus, imperium noſtrum tibi commendamus. Per te vivimus, per te victores & fœlices exiſtimus. Summe ſancte Deus preces noſtras exaudi. Brachia noſtra ad te tendimus. Exaudi, ſancte ſumme Deus. *Lactant. de Mort. præſecut. c. 46.*

condition he was brought to acknowledge his wickedneſs, and begging of Chriſt to have mercy upon him, * *breathed forth his guilty Soul in a moſt deteſtable ſort of death.* And the ſame account *Salvian* † gives of the Victories that the *Goths* and *Vandals* obtained over the *Romans*, That they had learned to ſeek to God for help in their diſtreſs, and to aſcribe all their ſucceſs to him as the Author of it, and not as ‖ the *Romans* did, to Fortune, or Chance, or the Conduct of their General, or the Wiſdom of their Councils, or ſome other inferiour Cauſe. When theſe * *relied upon the* Hunns *for help, their Truſt was in God alone.*

* Nocentem ſpiritum deteſtabili genere mortis efflavit. *Id. c.* 50.

† In diſcrimine poſiti opem à Deo poſtulant, & proſperitates ſuas munus divinitatis appellant. *De Gub. Dei, l.* 7.

‖ Alius hoc aſcribit fortunæ, alius eventui, &c. nullus Deo. *Ibid.*

* Cum enim Gothi metuerent, præſumebamus nos in Chunis ſpem ponere, illi in Deo. *ibid.*

God doth and will take care of all his; and though he ſuffer the Diffident and Contemners of his Goodneſs to be miſerable, it is otherwiſe with them that duly rely upon him. He is their perpetual Defence, conſtantly watching over them for good, † *Their keeper, and their ſhade upon their right-hand, that the Sun may not ſmite them by day, nor the Moon by night. He preſerves them from all evil, preſerves their going out, and their coming in,* and will not let them be without any thing he ſees needful for them. *He will rain Bread from Heaven* (as a learned Man ‖ ſpeaks) *and ſet the Flint-ſtone a-broach, and turn the dry and waſte Wilderneſs into Rivers of Water, before his ſhall pine and periſh.* If other means fail, he has Miracles in ſtore for their relief, which, though not ordinarily to be expected, he will however

† Pſ. 121. 5, 6, 7, 8.

‖ *Gataker's* Chriſtian-man's Care, *p.* 50.

however make uſe of upon a juſt occaſion. By one means or other he will bring it to paſs, that they who depend upon him for ſafety, ſhall taſte the kindly effects of his Care over them.

'But what ſhall we ſay then to the Caſe of 'ſuch, whoſe Sufferings have been as eminent as 'their Piety? Has it not been often ſeen, that 'the beſt Men, who have been moſt obſervant of 'their Duty in all reſpects, and in particular, 'have moſt firmly truſted in God, have however 'met with a very troubleſome paſſage through 'this World? Our bleſſed Saviour foretold to 'his Apoſtles and other Diſciples, that they 'muſt be expoſed to manifold Tribulations du-'ring their abode here. And it is undeniable, 'that the firſt propagators of our Faith, and 'the Martyrs in the ſucceeding Ages of the 'Church, underwent a large ſhare of obloquy 'and reproach, contempt and diſgrace, being '*hated of all men for his name's ſake*, and were 'made to ſubmit to the utmoſt hardſhips, and 'to the cruelleſt and moſt frightful ſorts of death. 'And others who have not been called to bear 'ſo remarkable a Teſtimony to our Saviour's Do-'ctrine, have, notwithſtanding all their Confi-'dence in God, laboured under loſſes and diſap-'pointments, wants and troubles of divers kinds, 'as though they had been forſaken of him. And 'how ſhall we reconcile theſe Men's Sufferings to 'God's continual Care of all that truſt in him? This Difficulty I have * already, in a good mea-ſure, removed, but ſhall endeavour farther to clear it from theſe three following Obſervations.

* C. 3. Sect. 1. p. 57, &c.

1. A good Man may have Sufferings of that nature, that no Dependance upon God can reaſonably be ſuppoſed to ſhelter him againſt them.

He may possibly bring himself into trouble, by his own inadvertence, by not taking care to inform himself of, or not duly applying himself to the means that are proper in order to his welfare. Some oversight or other miscarriage of his own may have been the natural occasion of his misfortunes; and then it is very just and reasonable that God should permit him for a while to groan under them.

2. God may be pleased to lay his hand upon good Men, not out of displeasure, or unkindness, or neglect of them, but for other wise reasons of his own, (some of which I shall have occasion to instance in * hereafter, and therefore forbear to mention them at present) and may sufficiently reward them for it another way. Which was the case of the Apostles and first Disciples, and other Saints, Confessors, and Martyrs, who were to be especial Instruments of God's glory, by propagating his Fear and Worship amongst Mankind, and had no cause to think themselves forsaken of him, though their Fidelity to him cost them dear; because they had an unconceivably valuable Crown assigned them in the other life, as a Recompence for what they should undergo upon this account. Hence it was that they scorned to be affrighted at the sharpest Trials, rejoicing, on the contrary, when they were counted worthy to suffer for our Saviour's sake, triumphing at the thoughts of that incomparable Felicity, whereto they were shortly to be advanced, and which would not let them stick at any thing they saw necessary to be encountered in their way to it. At their lowest and worst estate they could have no more (indeed they had infinitely less) cause of complaint, than a Subject would have, who

* Sect. 2.

who having been earneſtly ſoliciting his Prince for a profitable Office, ſhould meet with a denial, but withall ſhould at the ſame time have a free Eſtate beſtowed upon him of many times the value. And therefore they could by no means think themſelves neglected by God, ſeeing he had provided ſo rich a Reward for them. Nor are their Sufferings any evidence that he will not grant a ſuitable ſupply of the good things of this life to thoſe that live in more propitious times.

3. God's Promiſes to them that rely upon him are not all of the ſame kind (as I have * already ſhewn) but ſometimes of ſupport under Sufferings, as well as of Deliverance from them at others. And his immenſe Power and Goodneſs may diſcover themſelves as much the one way as the other. The gracious influences of his Providence are ſeen, in carrying Men victoriouſly through the ſharpeſt Conflicts, taking off the edge of their Afflictions, and enabling them to ſuffer or die with chearfulneſs, no leſs than in preſerving them from theſe or other the like trials. Thus he was with the Martyrs whom he did not forſake in their ſevereſt Agonies, but took an eſpecial care of them, enabling them to triumph over all the oppoſition they met with, to the confuſion of their moſt avowed Adverſaries. He did *not leave them comfortleſs*, but adminiſtred to them in a very ſignal manner, making them † *more than conquerours through him that loved them.*

* C. 3 Sect. 2.

† Rom. 8. 37.

So that as *a little Philoſophy* (as the Lord *Bacon* ‖ obſerves) *inclineth a Man's Mind to Atheiſm, but depth in Philoſophy bringeth Mens Minds about to Religion*; ſo here, though a ſuperficial

‖ Eſſay 16.

view of the Hardships and Tortures these Saints endured, may represent their case as very deplorable, a more perfect insight into it will soon confute this notion, by manifesting them to have had a singular interest in God's favour, and been his peculiar care; because it could not otherwise have been that they should so courageously bear up against those multitudes of heavy pressures, under which Flesh and Blood must of it self have inevitably sunk.

The summe is, That God is always mindful of them that *cast their Care upon him*, and always ready to assist them, though not always the same way. He suits his Kindness to Mens Trust in him, and by how much the stronger and better settled this is, so much the more they may expect of his Relief. So that the less we depend upon our selves, and the more heartily we apply to him for Succour, in the better case we are at present; and are like, besides, to be continually improving in his Favour, and hence to enjoy yet greater measures of strength, and the more lasting safety. Which being the natural effect of a steady dependance upon God, the more our Confidence in him increases, the more will his Concern for us increase; and the more his Concern for us increases, the more still will our Confidence in him increase, till by degrees we find to our unspeakable comfort, that there is no Security like trusting in him, no Life like living upon his Providence, no Support in evil times, no Ease, no Satisfaction, no Happiness on this side Heaven, like *casting all our Care upon him.*

SECT.

SECT. II.

II. THIS Duty of Truſting in God is farther uſeful *for quieting our Minds in all Conditions.* This World being a place of continual Troubles and Diſappointments, where * *Sorrows, and Cares, and Sickneſſes, and the decays and infirmities of Age, and Fear, and Hunger, and Want, have taken up their abode*; whatſoever tends to leſſen theſe ſeldom fails of being eſteemed worthy of a regard ſuitable to the benefit expected from it. The Error is generally on the other hand, that Men ſpend too much time, and take too much pains for this Life, to the hazard of their eternal ſtate. Like *Martha*, their diligence *about many things* occaſions the neglect of *the one thing needful*, all their ſtudy being too often only how they may make themſelves happy here. To which end, no labour is thought too hard, ſo there appear any probability of an advantage by it; as if all our buſineſs in this World had been only to make proviſion for our ſhort continuance in it.

* Luctus & ultrices poſuere cubilia curæ,
Pallentesq; habitant morbi, triſtisq; ſenectus,
Et metus, & maleſuada fames, & turpis egeſtas.
Æneid. 6.

And yet when all is done, the uncertainty of ſucceſs in our wiſeſt undertakings ſhews beyond contradiction, that there is no ſurer way to a perfect enjoyment of one's ſelf, than a ſerious preparation of Mind for all Events. Hereby a Man's Thoughts are compoſed, that before were in continual agitation, fluctuating and toſſed about with every blaſt of Fortune, always in fear, and always buſied with vain Contrivances for the future, never at eaſe, and hardly hoping to

to be so. Experience convinces him of his own inability to determine his own portion either of Joy or Grief, Happiness or Misery, or to prevent a thousand chances, which may happen to cross his Designs, in spight of his utmost power and foresight. When he has employed all his Skill and Dexterity, all his Ingenuity, Wisdom, and Prudence in laying a long train for compassing his Ends, he knows not what diversity of unexpected accidents may make it miscarry, at least preventing its intended operation, perhaps giving it a quite contrary issue. And whilst he remains in this wavering uncertain state, it is impossible he should have any true enjoyment of himself, or whatsoever he most delights in. It is only a sure Trust in God that can free him from the burden of his wild roving Fancies, his fruitless Projects, and tormenting Cares. And this it doth by rendring him,

1. Less afraid of any appearance of Danger.
2. Less affected with any Evils that befal him.
3. Less solicitous for the future.

1. *First*, I say, a sure Trust in God renders persons less afraid of any appearance of danger, whether real, or imaginary only. It must be acknowledged, that a great part of many Men's fears are perfectly chimerical, the meer product of their own idle or melancholick Fancies, filling their Heads with needless Jealousies of what is never like to come to pass, but yet the dread whereof breeds no less uneasiness in their Minds, than if they certainly foreknew that thus it must be. Quite contrary to him at * *Athens*, who viewing the Port there, and observing the Ships coming in to unlade their Burdens, conceited them all to be his

* Athenæ. Deipnosoph. l. 12. p. ult.

his own, and pleaſed himſelf as much with the conceit, as if it had been true. They expect e're long to groan under all the Evils they obſerve to befall others, though in very different circumſtances, and whence there is no pretence to conclude, that themſelves ſhall become their Fellow-ſufferers. And * this Expectation is almoſt as bad to them, as if they really felt the Pains and Aches in their Bodies, the Wants or Loſſes in their outward Eſtates, the Contempt and Reproaches, or whatſoever ſort of grievances they apprehend themſelves moſt liable to. Now it is ſome commendation of a ſteady Reliance upon God, that it effectually removes whatever diſturbances ariſe from this ſource, and teaches perſons rather to employ their Thoughts in meditating upon the manifold ineſtimable Bleſſings they may reaſonably hope for at the hand of a moſt gracious Father, who is infinitely good in himſelf, and whoſe delight it is to be inceſſantly doing good to his poor Creatures. It furniſhes their Minds with a more agreeable ſort of Contemplations, and ſo at once diverts their wonted Suſpicions, and adminiſters a ſupply of ſubſtantial Comforts inſtead thereof. By directing them patiently to wait for the completion of all God's Promiſes, it ſets them above the power of many anxious ſurmiſes, whereto they were before in bondage.

* Quis enim poteſt mortem aut dolorem metuens, quorum alterum ſæpe adeſt, alterum ſemper impendet, eſſe non miſer? *Cic. Tuſc. Quæſt. l.* 5.

But it is much more conſiderable, that a hearty exerciſe of this Duty is an admirable Preparation for thoſe more real Dangers which encompaſs us at every turn. There is no living without frequent croſſes, and frequenter juſt grounds of fear, eſpecially in times of any publick

lick Disturbances, or other common Calamities. And these will sadly imbitter the utmost happiness a Man can hope to attain to at present, and must inevitably overthrow it, unless prevented by a chearful expectation of safety from above. * Nothing will ease our Minds in this case like a serious remembrance, that no Evils, how formidable soever can befall us, but by God's permission, and that if he do permit it, he knows how not only to keep them from hurting us, but to give us occasion of rejoicing in them. His All-sufficiency is the most sovereign Cordial for the support of our drooping Spirits, the safest Armour against all the assaults of an unlucky Fortune; and whosoever rests entirely upon this need never fear. *Though he walk through the valley of the shadow of death*, he needs not be discouraged, for he knows already that all things are at God's disposal, and he over-ruleth them as he pleaseth, but always for the good of those that rightly put their trust in him. Hence he can securely behold the World in combustion all about him; and in the midst of its greatest dangers, when the Winds blow, and the Waves rage and foam, and there is no appearance of an escape from any other means, † he can sit as upon a Rock, and defie all their Violence, and admire the singular comfort it is to him, that being in God's Hand no evil can prevail against him. Having thus fixed his Hope in God, he has a pure Defence. Whatever mischiefs seem to hang

* Equidem sapientem illum conscientiâ suâ fretum, securum & confidentem in omni vitâ dici, & futurum, quod omnia accidentia reputet ad meliores rationes trahens, & quod nihil morosè vel difficulter excipiat sibique persuadeat pertinere res suas ad immortales Deos. *Apol. de Habit. Doct. Plat. l.* 2.

† Quisquis composito serenus ævo
Fatum sub pedibus dedit superbum,
Fortunamq; tuens utramque rectus
Invictum potuit tenere vultum,

hang over him, he queſtions not but to be ſufficiently ſheltered againſt them, that either they ſhall not reach him, or if they do, their fall ſhall have its force ſo broken, that he ſhall receive little or no harm from them. Which is the next Inſtance of the Uſefulneſs of this Duty for quieting our Minds, in that as it makes Men leſs afraid of Dangers, ſo alſo,

Non illum rabies minæque Ponti
Verſum funditus excitantis æſtum,
Nec ruptis quoties vagus caminis,
Torquet fumificos Veſevus igneis,
Aut celſas ſoliti ferire turres
Ardentis vi fulminis movebit.
Boet. de Conſolat. l. 1. Metr. 4.

2. Leſs affected with any Evils that befall them. Let whatever Misfortunes come, the good Chriſtian who has learned to *caſt his Care upon God*, finds his belief in him a mighty abatement of their Burden. As he ſuffers not himſelf to be diſcompoſed with the fear of them whilſt at a diſtance, and in proſpect only, ſo neither is he overcharged with grief when he comes to feel them. He looks not ſo much *at the Rod*, as *at him that has appointed it*, and when its ſtrokes are ſmarteſt, he knows from whom they come, and that if rightly conſidered, he can have no cauſe to complain of them. When he perceives himſelf under the ſoreſt preſſures that at any time ſeize him, he is not affrighted at them, becauſe his Truſt in God ſupports him, by ſuggeſting to him theſe following, or the like Meditations.

Medit. I. *That no Misfortune befalls any of us without God's Providence*, nothing ever happening either well or ill without his Obſervation; and conſequently, that all our Grievances are from him. * *Affliction doth not come forth of the duſt, nor doth trouble ſpring out of the ground:* but all, † *both good and evil proceedeth out of the mouth of the moſt high*, all our Croſſes and Afflictions

* Job 5. 6.
† Lam. 3. 38.

flictions being known to him, and coming according to the direction of his infinite Wisdom, and the guidance of his Providence. * *Shall there be evil in the City*, saith the Prophet, that is to say, any evil of Punishment or Suffering, *and the Lord hath not done it?* † Neither particular Persons, nor whole Communities suffer any thing, but as pleases him.

* Am. 3. 6.

† Quicquid patimur venit ex alto. *Sen. Oedip.* 5. 2.

Medit. II. *That God being infinitely Wise and Good sends no Afflictions but for wise and good Ends.* He orders ‖ all things with the greatest Reason, as becomes a Being of infinite Perfections, propounding to himself the best Designs, and always using the best means for their accomplishment. And though we may not be able to fathom his intent in the Afflictions he lays upon us, we may easily find abundant cause readily to submit to them. It is intolerable Irreverence to suspect our selves hardly dealt by, because the Almighty is not pleased to ask our Advice, or take those Methods in all his Dispensations, which are most agreeable to our Desires. When our Case seems most disconsolate, he may have weighty Reasons for it, that we are not aware of; but if we were, would force us heartily to admire his ineffable Wisdom, and Goodness, and thankfully to bless and praise him for his Care of us. As for instance.

‖ Permittes ipsis expendere numinibus, quid Conveniat nobis, rebusq; sit utile nostris. *Juv. Sat.* 10.

The design of our Sufferings perhaps may be, to mortifie some unruly Lust or Passion, or to affect us with a sense of some heinous Crime not duly repented of; it may be to bring down our proud looks, as it fared with King * *Nebuchadnezar*; to humble us for some notorious wickedness, as the Message † King *David* received by

* Dan. 4. 32, 33.

† 2 Sam. 24. 13.

the

the Prophet *Gad*, or to prevent our being puffed up with an high conceit of our ſelves, as S. * *Paul's Thorn in the Fleſh.* * 2 Cor. 12. 7.

It may be to teach us Patience, that this † *having its perfect work, we may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing*; ‖ *That our Tribulation may work patience, and patience experience*, or rather * approbation upon tryal, and this approbation may produce an *hope which maketh not aſhamed.* † S. Ja. 1. 4. ‖ Rom. 5. 4. * Τὴν δοκιμὴν.

It may be to inform us of the true value of God's Mercies, and † make us prize them the more highly when we have them, by knowing what it is to want them. † Plus ſenſimus quod habuimus, poſtquam habere deſivimus. *D. Hierom. Epiſt.* 26. Tum denique homines noſtra intelligimus bona, quum quæ in poteſtate habuimus, ea amiſimus. *Plaut. Captiv.* 1. 2.

It may be to wean our Affections from this World, that being experimentally convinced, how little reaſon there is to expect a ſtate of Happineſs here, we may be taught to look forward to another Life, and to ‖ *preſs on towards the mark, for the prize of the high-calling of God in Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.* ‖ Phil. 3. 14.

It may be to heighten our Devotion, and make us the more zealous and earneſt in our Addreſſes to him, that in our * *Affliction we may ſeek him early.* * Hoſ. 5. 15.

It may be by way of puniſhment for ſome abominable wickedneſs obſtinately perſiſted in, as † *Pharaoh was raiſed up for this very cauſe, that God might ſhew in him his power*, and by his Vengeance executed upon that wicked King, might have his Juſtice admired, and his *Name ſpoken of throughout the Earth*; or for ſome ſcandalous Enormity, † Exod. 9. 16.

Enormity, which though repented of, makes it necessary for vindicating God's Honour, that he take the matter into his own Hands; as * the Prophet *Nathan* was sent to King *David*, to acquaint him, that having by his barbarous usage of *Uriah*, *given occasion to the Enemies of God to blaspheme*, he should therefore be punished with *the death of his Child* that was to be born, and that *the Sword should never depart from his House*. Thus God may deal with others; and when he doth, the consideration of their Transgressions, whereby they † have provoked him to treat them after this manner, if duly attended to, will dispose them to reflect upon their own folly, rather than murmur or be dissatisfy'd at God's Judgments so deservedly inflicted upon them; and will teach them for their comfort, how they may get themselves eased of their Burden, and that it is not God's but their own doing, if they continue to groan under its weight; and moreover, that it is an abundant happiness for them to be punished here, rather than in the other World.

* 2 Sam. 12. 10, 14.

† Vim Deo facimus iniquitatibus nostris, iram in nos Divinitatis armamus, nolentem ulcisci cogimus; parcere volentem non permittimus. *Salv. de Providentia, l.* 5.

Or lastly, It may be for the tryal of *our Faith*, as it was with *Job*, that singular Example of a quiet submission to God's Will, and of a stedfast Fidelity to him, under all his Visitations, and with our Lord's first Disciples and Apostles; that our Trust in him thus experimented, ‖ *may be found unto Praise, and Honour, and Glory, at the appearance of Jesus Christ*; to * prove our Sincerity in what we profess, and to see whether we will immovably adhere to God and our Duty,

‖ 1 *S.* Pet. 1. 7.

* Conflictatio cum adversis probatio est veritatis. *D. Cypr. de mortalit.* Cruciate, torquete, at-

ty, as well when he seems to frown upon us, as when he follows us with his more favourable Dispensations.

terite, damnate nos. Probatio est innocentiæ nostræ iniquitas vestra. *Tertul Apol. c ult.* In tribulationibus quis sit fidelis agnoscitur. *Sext. Pythagor. ex Vers. Ruffini.* Apparet virtus, arguiturq; malis. *Ovid. de Trist. l. 4. Eleg. 3.* Ἐὰν δὲ μίξῃς τῶν εὐτυχίαις τὰ δυσχερῆ, μᾶλλον αἰσθήσῃ τῆς ἀρετῆς. Maxim. Tyr. Dissert. 35.

These and many other like Reasons God may have for laying his Hand heavy upon us, which when discovered, will clearly vindicate his Proceedings. And the consideration whereof should therefore banish all manner of Dissatisfaction at the harshest of his Corrections, and should persuade us all, that he always acts upon just and good grounds, though possibly through the weakness of our Understanding we may not at present discern particularly what they are.

Medit. III. *That whatsoever troubles are thus sent us by God, they can never hurt us, except through our own fault.* They would not be at all sent to us, did not our selves give occasion for them by our Sins, or want them in order to our improvement in Goodness here, and our greater Happiness hereafter; or unless we might be Instruments of promoting God's Glory by a due attendance to them. And when they do come, they can never make us miserable if we mind to improve them aright, by endeavouring to answer the Ends for which they are sent.

If they befall us as a just punishment of our Sins, our selves are very apparently the cause of them, and must therefore seek for a redress from our selves, by forsaking the Sins which called for them. And if we do not this; and when they are designed for our improvement in Patience, Humility, or whatsoever other Vertue, if we do

not enquire into God's purpoſe in inflicting them, they may prove prejudicial in either of theſe caſes. But then, all the blame of this lies at our own doors, becauſe we attend not to the reaſon of their befalling us, and the uſe that ought to be made of them.

It is indeed a different caſe, when our Sufferings are intended only for the trial of our Fidelity, or that we may be Examples to others of an eminent Conſtancy under Afflictions; that is to ſay, when we are called to bear with hardſhips, *as good Souldiers of Jeſus Chriſt*, and to *endure griefs, ſuffering wrongfully for conſcience towards God, when we do well, and* yet are called to *ſuffer for it*. This is one of the Atheiſts commoneſt grounds of Exception againſt the Divine Providence; and it is, I confeſs, a conſiderable difficulty to Fleſh and Blood, and which therefore gave occaſion to our Bleſſed Saviour to caution his Followers ſo often to expect and prepare for it. But yet, beſides that, this is no more, nay, is incomparably leſs than our bleſſed Lord freely endured upon our account; a ſure Truſt in God will wonderfully alleviate all the trouble hereof, by the comfortable hope it ſets before us, either of a glorious and ſpeedy Deliverance here, or an ineſtimably valuable Reward hereafter. This it was that ſo ſignally encouraged the three Children againſt all the Menaces of King * *Nebuchadnezzar*; whereupon *Tertullian* cries out, † *O martyrium & ſine paſſione perfectum!* &c. *O Martyrdom even perfected without Suffering! they had ſuffered enough, and were burnt enough, whom God therefore protected, leaſt he ſhould ſeem to bely his own Power.* This made the firſt Profeſſors of our Faith ‖ ſo forward to undergo the utmoſt

* Dan. 3. 18.
† Scorpiac. c. 8.
‖ Rom. 8. 35, 36. Act. 5. 41. 2 Cor. 4. 10, 11.

utmoſt Cruelties for their Saviour's ſake. This made thoſe numbers of Martyrs in the following Ages of the Church ſo willingly * expoſe themſelves to all the Inſults and Outrages of their mercileſs Adverſaries, † defying Baniſhments, Tortures, Loſſes, Beaſts, Fires, Swords, or Croſſes, to make them miſerable; ‖ enduring the ſharpeſt Severities with a wonderful compoſure of Mind; * neither ſuffering any kind of Force, nor Threatnings, nor Flatteries, nor Life, nor Death, nor the Court, nor its Officers, nor the Emperor, nor the Empire, nor Men, nor Devils, to affright them from the Faith they had received from their Forefathers; † rejoicing that they ſhould by this means be delivered out of the Hands of their wicked Maſters; ‖ eſteeming of their Chains as the Crowns, the Ornaments and Diadems of the truly elect of God and Chriſt; * and ruſhing with greater eagerneſs upon theſe glorious trials, than wherewith others have ſince endeavoured after the principal Stations in the Church.

* Σπεύδωμεν δὲ τὸ ὁμολογεῖν. Juſt. M. Apol. 2. Neq; cruciatum, neq; mortem, pro fide recuſamus. *Lactant. Inſt. l. 7. c. 5.* Qui ſe excruciandos & excarnificandos pro Evangelio furentibus tradidiſſent, ne Martyrii honorem merito perderent. *D. Cyprian. Epiſt.* 30. Non præſcripta exilia, non deſtinata tormenta, non rei familiaris damna, non corporis ſupplicia terruerunt. *D. Cypr. de lapſis.*

† Sic itaq; nos ad Deum expanſos ungulæ fodiant, cruces ſuſpendant, ignes lambant, gladii guttura detruncent, beſtiæ inſiliant, paratus eſt ad omne ſupplicium ipſe habitus orantis Chriſtiani. *Tertul. Apol. c.* 30.

‖ Τὰς δὲ εἰς πιστὸν γενναιότητα ἐλεύθεν, ὥστε μήτε βρύξαι, μήτε στενάξαι πρὸς αὐτούς. De Martyr. Polycarpi.

* A defenſione fidei majorum nulla vis depulit, non minæ, non blandimenta, non vita, non mors, non palatium, non ſatellites, non Imperator, non imperium, non homines, non dæmones. *Vin. Lyrin.*

† Χάειν εἶναι ὁμολογεῖ (ὁ Λέντι) πυνθάνων ἀποσταλῆναι ἀπολέχθαι γινώσκων. Juſt. M. Apol. 1. Decretum ex tabellâ recitavit; Thalcium Cyprianum gladio animadverti placet: Cyprianus Epiſcopus dixit, Deo gratias. *D. Cypriani Paſſ. ex Vet. MS.*

‖ Τοῖς ἀμοιρεσπίσι δέσμοις, ἅπερ ἐστὶ διαδήματα τῶν ἀληθῶς ὑπὸ Θεῦ καὶ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν ἐκλελεγμένων. Polycarp ad Philip.

* Certatim gloriosa in certamina ruebatur, multoq; avidius martyria, gloriosis mortibus quærebantur, quàm nunc Episcopatus pravis ambitionibus appetuntur. *Sulpic. Severi Hist. Sacr. in an.* 304. Cum omni sævitia vestra concertamus, etiam ultro irrumpentes; magisq; damnati quàm absoluti gaudemus. *Tertul. ad Scap.* Saturninus quidem omnibus bestiis velle se objici profitebatur · ut sc. gloriosiorem gestaret coronam. *Pass. SS. Perpet. & Felic.* Θανατούμενοι χαίρομεν. Just. M. c. Tryph. Θανατοῦσθαι μᾶλλον αἱρούμεθα καὶ ὑπομένομεν, πεπεισμένοι ὅτι πάνθ' ὅσα ὑπέσχηται ὁ Θεὸς διὰ τοῦ χριστοῦ, ἀγαθὰ, ἀποδώσει ἡμῖν. Ibid.

And this same Trust in God, together with that Assistance of the holy Spirit which still goes along with it, (though not in that miraculous manner as formerly) hath enabled multitudes of others since, *to take patiently the spoiling of their Goods*, or whatsoever other Barbarities, *not accounting their lives dear to them, so they might finish their course with joy*, and might secure to themselves an Interest in the eternal Rewards of the other Life.

There is a great deal of Satisfaction in suffering in a Righteous Cause, and when it cannot be avoided without Sin. For a Man to offer himself in this case, to conflict with Hunger and Thirst, Cold and Nakedness, Watchings and Fastings, Scorn and Contempt, Pains and Tortures, to be deprived of his ordinary means of Subsistence, and his wonted capacity of doing good, to be reproached, reviled, defamed, to be *persecuted, afflicted, tormented*, and perhaps, at last, *to resist unto Blood*; thus *to be made a spectacle, to the World, to Angels, and to Men*, rather than be induced to depart from his Integrity, is an evidence of an immovable Confidence in God, and may be expected to meet with a suitable return of Kindness from him. He has a particular regard for such who thus cast themselves upon him

him, and *perfects his ſtrength in their weakneſs*, and the more they rely upon his Care, and the leſs upon themſelves, or the help of others, the more peculiarly he concerns himſelf for them. They ſhall not be left deſtitute whilſt he beholds their ſtedfaſt Dependance upon his Providence, for he will be ſure to find out a means of ſupport for them, that in the midſt of their acuteſt agonies they ſhall have no cauſe to complain of him, or to repent of the Tribulations they encounter for his ſake, and for their conſtant and faithful adherence to the Truths delivered in his Goſpel, and their conſcientious obſervance of his Laws. * It is a glorious ſight to obſerve a devout Chriſtian reſolutely expoſing himſelf to Death, or Pains, or Loſſes, or whatever Perſecution, without fear of being forſaken by God in his extremity. This is the trueſt and beſt ſign of an unfeigned Affiance in (as well as of an hearty Love, and entire Reſignation to) Almighty God, and gives therefore the beſt Title to his favourable Protection. And if this be not enough to ſet our Minds at reſt, and make us eaſie under Troubles, a ſure Truſt in God ſuggeſts farther,

* Quàm pulchrum eſt ſpectaculum cùm Chriſtianus cum dolore congreditur, cùm adverſum minas & ſupplicia, & tormenta componitur? Cùm ſtrepitum mortis, & horrorem carnificis inſultet? *Min. Fel. Octav.*

Medit. IV. *That they not only cannot hurt us without our own fault, but moreover,* † *it is our fault if we be not benefited by them.* As unwelcome as theſe ſort of Diſpenſations ordinarily are, they may poſſibly make for our advantage even in this preſent life, whether from their own natural tendency, or from the Mercy of Almighty God

† Nullum enim tam grave malum apparebit, quin ex eo bonum aliquod multo majus, multoque optabilius, magno Deorum beneficio aliquando colligatur. *Cic. Conſolat. ad Brut.*

over-ruling them for our good. They may prove as healthful and salutary as that stroke of a Sword, * which, instead of putting an end to the Sufferers life, as was designed, only made a seasonable vent to let out an Imposthume, that must otherwise have speedily dispatch'd him. They may unexpectedly raise the Sufferers up new Friends, as † *Moses*'s being exposed in the *Nile* procured him the honour of being reputed King *Pharaoh*'s Grandson, and the privilege of being bred up at Court, and ‖ *instructed in all the learning of the* Egyptians: As *Bion* * by being exposed to sale, fell into the Hands of a kind Master, who dying left him his Heir; or as *Themistocles*'s Banishment from *Athens*, and the Difficulties and Dangers that befell him hereupon, brought him to the *Persian* Emperour, by whom he was entertained with that Kindness, and honoured to that degree, that he professed plainly, † *He had been undone, if he had never been undone.* They may put Men upon some new and unthought of Employment, as has been observed of ‖ *Zeno*, whose misfortune at Sea first brought him to the study of Philosophy, wherein he afterwards became a celebrated Proficient, and very much to his own Satisfaction. * So *Phædon*'s Captivity, and his Slavery consequent upon it, was the means of his coming to *Socrates*'s knowledge, and through his Favour and Kindness, to the study of Philosophy, and the Skill he attained

* Valer. Max. l. 1. c. 8.

† Exod. 2. 9, 10.

‖ Act. 7. 22.

* Καὶ μὲ ἀγοράζει τὶς ῥήτωρ νεώτερον ὄντα καὶ εὔχαριν· ὃς καὶ ἀποθνήσκων κατέλιπέ μοι πάντα. Diog. Laert. l. 4. in vitâ Bionis.

† Ὦ παῖδες ἀπωλόμεθα ἄν, εἰ μὴ ἀπωλόμεθα. Plut. in vita Themist.

‖ Nunciato naufragio, Zeno noster, cum omnia sua audierit submersa, Jubet me, inquit, Fortuna expeditius Philosophari. *Senec. de tranquil. anim.* c. 14. Οὗτος πλέων, καὶ χειμῶνος συμβάντος, καὶ ναυαγίου γινομένου, καὶ πάντων ἐκριπτουμένων— πρὸς τὴν τύχην ἐφθέγξατο· εὖγε, ὦ τύχη χάριν σοὶ ὁμολογῶ, &c. Nonni συναγ. ἱστορ. φασὶν αὐτὸν

attained to in it, and the Fame he got by it. † And the confiscating of *Chrysippus*'s Patrimony was likewise the first occasion of his becoming a Philosopher.

εἰπεῖν, Νῦν εὐπλόηκα, ὅτε νεναυάγηκα.— Ἄλλοι δὲ διατρίβοντα ἐν τῇ Ἀθήναις ἀκοῦσαι τὴν ναυαγίαν καὶ εἰπεῖν, Εὖγε ποιεῖ ἡ τύχη προσελαύνουσα ἡμᾶς φιλοσοφίᾳ. Diog. Laert. l. 7. in vita Zen. Εἶπεν, Εὖγε ὦ τύχη ποιεῖς εἰς τὸν τρίβωνα συνελαύνουσα ἡμᾶς. Plutar. de capienda ex hostibus utilitate & lib. de animi tranquil.

* Φαίδωνα δὲ δι' αἰχμαλωσίαν ἐπ' οἰκήματος καθήμενον προσέταξε Κρίτωνι λυτρώσασθαι, καὶ φιλόσοφον ἀπειργάσατο. Diog. Laert. l. 2. in vita Socratis, & in vitâ Phœd.

† Ἑκάτων δὲ φησιν ἐλθεῖν αὐτὸν ἐπὶ φιλοσοφίαν τῆς οὐσίας αὐτοῦ τῆς πατρῴας εἰς τὸ βασιλικὸν ἀναληφθείσης. D. Laert. l. 7. in vit. Chrysip.

Or farther, Men's Troubles may become a step to some extraordinary Advancement, and which without them they would never have attained to. ‖ Thus *Joseph* by being sold a Slave into *Egypt*, came at length to be *Governour of the Land*, which he had never been, if he had tarried safe at home in his own Country, and in his Father's House.

‖ Gen. 41. 40, 41, &c.

Or they may reclaim them from some costly and pernicious Extravagancies, wherein they had formerly indulged themselves; * as it fared with the Prodigal Son in our Saviour's Parable.

* S. Luk. 15. 11, &c.

Or, lastly, they may excite them to greater Diligence for the future, whereby to arm themselves the better against other like Streights and Exigencies, and so may put them into a method of thriving for the remaining part of their Lives.

And † many other ways there are, whereby a present loss or other disadvantage may turn to account in this Life, making our *latter end* like ‖ *Job's, far better than the beginning.*

† Multorum mortem distulit morbus, & saluti illis fuit videri perire. *Senec. Epist.* 78. Quam multos militiæ morbus eripuit? quosdam ne ad ruinam domus suæ occurrerent, inimicus vadimonio tenuit; ne

in piratarum manus pervenirent, quidam naufragio consecuti sunt. *Id. de benef. l. 6. c. 9.*

‖ Job 42. 12.

But this is a small matter in comparison of the inestimable, infinite reward, which a good improvement of our Sufferings may procure us in the World that is to come, by reason of the influence they generally have, for putting persons in mind of a better state, and the duty that is required in order to it. They are frequently observed to be singularly useful in this respect. And it argues an ill temper of mind, and a notorious degree of wickedness, where they prove otherwise. It was a very lamentable Relation that *Thucidides* * gave of the misbehaviour of the *Athenians*, in the time of their famous Pestilence, that whilst this Distemper raged most dreadfully amongst them, overpowring the Skill of their eminentest Physicians, triumphing over all attempts of Cure, driving the more considerate of them to the Temples, but sparing them no more there than in other places, when Death appeared every where in the dismalleſt shape, and without the least pity, the use their unhappy Citizens made hereof was but to indulge themselves the more boldly in their Vices, pursuant to that *Epicurean* Doctrine mentioned by S. *Paul*, † *Let us eat and drink for to morrow we die.* Considering the manifest uncertainty of their lives, they grew past all shame, resolving to deny themselves in nothing whilst they lived, nor to confine themselves to the observance of their duty, because they looked upon themselves and all they had to be but of a day's continuance. They had no regard to Modesty, Justice, or any thing that was becoming, but whatsoever they apprehended

* L. 2.

† 1 Cor. 15. 32.

hended to be for their Profit or Pleaſure, they were ſure to purſue, though by the moſt unlawful means, caſting off all fear of God, and all reſpect for Humane Laws, and gratifying their moſt unreaſonable Deſires without controul, becauſe they expected not to live ſo long as to be brought to puniſhment for their Villainies.

And the like miſerable account * *Pontius* the Deacon gives of the *Carthaginians*, and † *Gildas* of our own Nation, when they were infeſted with the ſame Diſeaſe, and ‖ *Joſephus* of ſome among the *Jews*, when they were plagued with Fire, Sword, and Peſtilence all at once. * As *Salvian* alſo complains of the Men of *Treves*, that when they were in a moſt deplorable condition, they yet perſiſted in their wickedneſs without any amendment. When their City was about to be ſack'd by the Enemy, they ſtill proceeded to multiply their Abominations, as though no danger were near them. And when their Ruine was compleated, their City burnt and laid waſte, their People taken Captives or ſlain, and whatever was left remaining gave ſuch occaſion of ſorrow, that † *it was hard to tell whoſe lot was hardeſt of the Dead or of the*

* Jacebant interim totâ civitate, non jam corpora, ſed cadavera plurimorum; & miſericordiam in ſe tranſeuntium, contemplatione ſortis mutuæ flagitabant. Nemo reſpexit aliud præterquam lucra crudelia, &c. *In vita D. Cypriani.*

† Peſtifera namq; lues feraliter inſipienti populo incumbit, quæ in brevi tantam ejus multitudinem remoto mucrone, ſternit, quantam ne poſſint vivi humare. Sed hac quidem emendatur, ut illud Iſaiæ prophetæ quoq; impleretur, dicentis: Et vocavit Deus ad planctum & calvitium, & cingulum ſacci; ecce vitulos occidere, & jugulare arietes: ecce manducare & bibere, &c. *De excidio Brit.*

‖ Ἦν γὰρ αὐτοῖς μετὰ νοια μὴ ἀδικία πρὸ κακῶν, ἀλαζονεία ἢ ὡς ἐπ' ἀγαθῶν. Περὶ ἁλωσ. Ἰουδ. l. 6. c. 38.

* Ne in ſummo quidem rerum diſcrimine, ceſſaſſe unquam vitia civium, uſq; ad excidia civitatum. *Salv. de gubern. Dei, l. 6.*

† In quâ neſcias pœne cujus ſit ſors pejor ac durior, interfectorum an viventium. *Ibid.*

‖ Ludicra ergo publica Trever petis? &c. *Ibid.*

Living,

Living, they were ſtill intent upon their Vanities and Pleaſures, requeſting of the Magiſtrates to have their *publick Plays*, as in times of Safety and Proſperity. So little influence had all their Sufferings upon them, when they ought much rather to have humbled them in the deepeſt manner that might be for all thoſe ſins which had brought theſe Miſeries upon them.

From which, and other like Inſtances, we may learn, to what exceſs of unlimited Impiety Mankind are too prone to be carried on, when they ceaſe to attend to God's Chaſtiſements, and the End that he deſigns in them. It was a mighty aggravation of theſe Peoples Wickedneſs that they dared to allow themſelves in it at a time, when God in an eminent manner *called to weeping, and to mourning, and to baldneſs, and to girding with ſack-cloath.* When they ſhould have been moſt ſolemnly bewailing their Iniquities, and crying earneſtly to God for pardon, and ſhould have unfeignedly reſolved upon a better Obedience for the future, they took a quite contrary courſe, as if they had no ſenſe at all of what they already endured, or what more they had cauſe to fear; and by this means highly provoked God to have plagued them yet much more ſeverely for all their Abominations. Which, though very offenſive, if they had been committed at another ſeaſon, and in other circumſtances, were in this caſe more intolerably ſo, as containing in them, together with their own natural turpitude and immorality, an horrid abuſe alſo of the very means that God thought fit to make uſe of in order to their Reformation.

But it was far otherwiſe with the *Ninevites*, when the Prophet *Jonah* was ſent to forwarn them

them of the Deſtruction that was preparing for them, and would ſpeedily overtake them, except they would amend their doings. For no ſooner was news hereof brought * *to the King of Nineveh*, but immediately *he aroſe from his Throne, and laid his Robe from him, and covered him with Sack-cloath, and ſate in Aſhes,* (as the manner of thoſe times was in their ſolemn Humiliations) *and he cauſed it to be proclaimed and publiſhed through Nineveh, by the decree of the King and his Nobles, ſaying, Let neither Man nor Beaſt, Herd nor Flock taſt any thing; let them not feed, nor drink Water; but let Man and Beaſt be covered with Sack-cloath, and cry mightily unto God; yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands.* * Jon. 3. 6, 7, 8.

Thus † *Cæſar* enforms us concerning the Inhabitants of *Marſeilles*, that when *C. Tribonius* lay in ſiege againſt them, it was eaſie to be ſeen from the Camp and other Eminencies, how the young People in the Town, as well as the Elder and more ſerious, and their Wives and Children, and their very Guards fell to their Devotions, ſome praying from the top of the Wall, and others flocking to the Temples to beg a Deliverance. † De bello civ. l. 2.

And thus it was generally obſerved of the Heathen Mariners, that they were wont in their Diſtreſs, to pray, and make Vows to ſome of their ſuppoſed Deities, and upon their eſcape to bring their Oblations to the Temples in token of their Gratitude.

And becauſe it was not thus amongſt the *Jews*, but they remained incorrigible under God's correcting hand, he was highly incenſed againſt them, and threatened to avenge himſelf upon them

them for it. He had viſited them with divers ſorts of Plagues, with Famine, and Drought, and Blaſting, and Mildew, the Palmer-worm, the Peſtilence, and the Sword, * *Had overthrown ſome of them as the Lord overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah*, and the reſt were *as a fire-brand plucked out of the fire*; and now he reſented it very highly that they ſtill perſiſted in their Diſobedience, after he had eſſayed ſo many ſeveral ways for their Reformation, and therefore makes this complaint of their unfruitfulneſs under all his Chaſtiſements, *yet have ye not returned unto me, ſaith the Lord*; and ſo he proceeds to intimate to them, what Vengeance they were hereupon to expect at his Hands. Whence appears both what the intent of theſe ſevere Judgments were, and how it diſpleaſed God that they made no better uſe of them. This he accounted a great addition to all their other Wickedneſſes, and therefore lets them know, that they muſt certainly expect to ſmart for it, if continued in.

* Am. 4. 11.

Sufferings have an admirable efficacy for putting a ſtop to divers kinds of Sins, ſuch as Luxury, Idleneſs, Pride, Ambition, and the like, for weaning Mens Minds from the things of this World, for elevating their Thoughts and Affections to, and quickening their Endeavours after a better ſtate, for enlivening their Devotion, and putting them upon frequent and fervent Addreſſes to the Throne of God's Grace, for humbling them under a ſenſe of their numerous Iniquities, and the Guilt contracted by them, and for inviting to a commiſeration of their Fellow-ſufferers, and exciting them hereby to all proper offices of Charity. They are of great uſe to obſtruct the Sinners career of Wickedneſs, to reduce

duce the inconsiderate to a sober mind, and to engage those of a better Disposition to endeavour after farther improvements in Holiness. For this cause, as * *Clemens Alexandrinus* speaks, *Want and Sickness, and other like trials are often sent as Monitors, to rectifie past Miscarriages, and introduce a better Obedience for the future.* They are intended by God to bring Persons to a serious consideration of their ways, and their doings, and stir them up to an amendment of whatever is amiss therein. And it is nothing but our non-attendance to them, or abuse of them, that prevents their producing this good effect. *If they be bound in fetters,* saith *Elihu* in in the Book of † *Job, and holden in cords of affliction, then he sheweth them their work, and their transgressions that they have exceeded; he openeth also their ear to discipline, and commandeth that they return from iniquity.* And this holy *David* experimented to his great satisfaction, as himself professes; ‖ *Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now have I kept thy word*; and again, * *It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes.*

* Πενία μὲν οὖν πολλάκις, καὶ νόσος, καὶ τοιαῦται πεῖραι ἐπὶ νουθεσίᾳ προσφέρονται, καὶ πρὸς διόρθωσιν τῶν παρεληλυθότων, καὶ πρὸς ἐπιστροφὴν τῶν μελλόντων. Strom. l. 7.

† C. 36. 8, 9, 10.

‖ Ps. 119. 67.

* v. 71.

† A long Prosperity too often lulls Men asleep in a carnal security, making them careless and remiss, forgetfull of God and their Duty. And hence Afflictions, and sometimes severe ones, become necessary for them, to awaken them out of their former stupidity, and put them upon a diligent preparation for another life.

† Tum maximè Deus ex memoriâ hominum elabitur, quum beneficiis ejus fruentes honorem dare divinæ indulgentiæ debent. *Lactant. Instit. l. 2. c. 1.* Sed videlicet qui corrumpimur rebus prosperis, corrigimur adversis, & quos intemperantes pax longa fecit, turbatio facit esse moderatos. *Salv. de gubern. Dei, l. 16.*

* They

* Πᾶσα γὰρ κόλασις ἰατρεία δεῖ τῶν ἡμαρτημένων ψυχῶν. Alcin. dogm. Plat. c. 23. Ἔστιν ἰατρικὴ τῶν πονηρίας ἡ δίκη, καὶ ταύτῃ ἔχει τὴν χρείαν τὸ περὶ ἡμᾶς ταῦτα δικαίως γινόμενα. Simpl. in Epicteti Ench. c. 13.

* They are highly usefull for the cure of our disordered Souls. And if like other Physick they be unpalatable or uneasie at present, this may very well be born with, so they but work their design'd effect, so they but prove like † S. *Ignatius*'s Martyrdom, a means of fitting us for the Banquet of the great King.

† Tribulatio necessaria est his qui salvantur, ut quodammodo contriti & attenuati, & conspersi per patientiam verbo Dei, & igniti apti sint ad convivium Regis. Quemadmodum quidam de nostris dixit, propter martyrium in Deum adjudicatus ad bestias: Quoniam frumentum sum Christi. *Iren. adv. haeres. l.* 5. *c.* 28. Σῖτός εἰμι τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ δι' ὀδόντων θηρίων ἀλήθομαι, ἵνα καθαρὸς ἄρτος Θεοῦ εὑρεθῶ. S. Ignat. Ep. ad Rom.

Medit. V. A firm trust in God suggests farther, *That when our Afflictions have done their Office, we shall be sure of a Deliverance out of them.* They have their Bounds set them, in respect to both their weight and their duration, and they can no more exceed these than the Sea can transcend its Banks and overflow the Earth. They can neither sit heavier, nor last longer than our gracious God will permit them; who *neither slumbereth, nor sleepeth*, but has his Eye continually upon us, to behold our wants, and his Ear open to hear our Prayers, when we seek to him in our Streights. And since *he doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of Men*, there needs no proof of his readiness to withdraw his Hand, whensoever we cease to want its corrections, or have otherwise answered his design in them.

These several Meditations a sure Trust in God offers for quieting our Minds under all disasters. It directs us to consider, that all our Troubles

are

are known to God, and come not without his Providence, and only for wise and good Ends; and as they can never hurt us without our fault, so they may be highly beneficial to us, possibly here, but most certainly hereafter, if our selves prevent it not; and again, that how uneasie soever any of them may be, we may certainly expect a freedom from them in due time. It teaches to observe whence all our Grievances proceed, and on what errand they come, and when they seem most terrible, it very much allays their Severity, by fixing our Thoughts and Hopes upon Almighty God, as our best Security even in the worst Condition. It disposes us, when any troubles befall us, when we either miss of any thing we earnestly desire, or are seized with any heavy calamity, to look up to God, and think what a privilege it is to be under the covert of his Wings, and to rest fully satisfy'd, that * whatever he doth is best for us, and it is therefore our Interest as well as our Duty, to acquiesce in it.

*Conjugium petimus, partumq; uxoris; at illi
Notum, qui pueri, qualisq; futura sit uxor.

And would persons but be persuaded seriously to apply themselves to the practice of it, their own Experience would above all other Arguments convince them of this great Truth. For I am very sure, they would hence find more hearty Joy and Satisfaction even in the midst of all their Troubles, than they would be willing to exchange for all things in this World besides. They would quickly perceive it to be † much easier, and safer, and happier, and in all respects abundantly better to be in God's Hands than in their own. Especially, considering that the exercise of this

†Nam pro jucundis aptissima quæq; Dabunt Dii. Charior est illis homo quàm sibi.
Juv. Sat. 10.

Duty,

Duty, is not only useful for quieting our Minds in all conditions, by lessening our apprehensions of Danger, and taking off the edge of Afflictions, but likewise by rendring us,

3. Less solicitous for the future. It is divers persons great unhappiness to be continually vexing and tormenting themselves, by putting a wrong construction upon all the Dispensations of God's Providence towards them. Contrary to the Rules of common Prudence, which would instruct them to recollect all the alleviating Circumstances of any trouble, whereby to render it the lighter, these are sure to allow it all the Aggravations they can think of, and hereby add a very considerable weight to its burden. They make it their business to fix their Thoughts upon the less pleasing Prospect of any Event, as if they must never hope to be happy, because all things don't go at present according to their Minds. When they look at the Inconveniencies whereto they lie exposed, they take care to magnifie them to the utmost, and perhaps much beyond what they will well bear; but when at the Comforts that may arise from them, or the other Advantages they enjoy to counterpoise them, or whatever might tend to lighten them, here they invert the Tube, that so they may keep off all Consolation from themselves.

Or if they have nothing to complain of at present, they can yet perplex themselves with fears of being miserable, they know not when, nor how.

Or if things look too clear for this, they still apprehend, that howsoever themselves escape, their Posterity may be brought to a low condition, and this thought likewise creates them no small disturbance. Now

Now all the uneasiness of this kind that any meet with (except where it depends upon a prevailing Melancholy in the Body) can proceed from nothing else, but a sinful distrust of God's Goodness. And consequently, the removal hereof will leave no more room for these surmises For how is it possible for that Man to dread being left in a forlorn condition, who firmly believes, and lays to heart the manifold Promises that God has made, and Blessings he has vouchsafed to them that *have cast their Care upon him? What can he lack*, as *Eusebius* * well argues, *who can reckon upon the great King and Governour of all things, as his Parent and Protector?* Nay, what can he fear either for himself or his, who calls to mind what a loving, merciful and infinitely compassionate God has obliged himself to provide for him?

* Τίνος ἂν ἐλαττῶτο, ὁ καὶ πατρὸς ἐν χώρᾳ καὶ κηδεμόνος τὴν μέγαν προστάτην καὶ παμβασιλέα τῶν ὅλων ἐπιγραφόμενος. Præpar. Evang. l. 1. c. 1.

Had we been left to our own management, there would have been just cause to suspect least every attempt we engaged in might miscarry, either through our own folly, or weakness, or the opposition of other Men, or a thousand accidents that might attend it. But it is quite otherwise with all that know themselves under God's Protection; for he is no less able to perform what he has undertaken for them, than he was gracious in undertaking it. And they need therefore be no farther concerned for their own Wants or Infirmities, or insufficiency in whatever respect, than to take occasion from hence to fly the more readily to Him for help, and depend the more stedfastly upon him. And indeed to do otherwise, is but to lay an unnecessary

* burden upon themselves, to anticipate their Sorrows, and in a word, to make themselves unhappy at present, for fear they should be so hereafter. Like him that would wilfully starve himself to day, least he should want Victuals to morrow.

* Quid necesse est mala accessere, & satis citò patienda cùm venerint præsumere, ac præsens tempus futuri metu perdere? Est sine dubio stultum, quia quandoq; sis futurus miser, esse jam miserum. *Senec. Epist.* 24.

Why then art thou cast down, O my soul? why art thou so disquieted within me? Have I not still the same God to trust in, who hath hitherto been extreamly bountiful to me? and have I not good reason to rely upon him still as much as ever? is he not still both as able and as willing to take care of me as heretofore? † Away then with all unworthy thoughts of his Providence! away with all needless solicitude for the future, as if he did not mind my Wants. What irreverence, what undutifulness, what ingratitude must I be guilty of, before I can suffer my self to distrust him? And what unnecessary endless Vexations do I also hereby bring upon my self which might be effectually prevented, if I had but consideration enough to weigh well with my self, what an incomparable happiness it is, to have an interest in the Divine Protection, and how easie I might be under it, were it not for my own Imprudence.

† Τὰ μέλλοντα μὴ ταραττέτω· ἥξεις γὰρ ἐπ' αὐτὰ ἐὰν δέῃ φέρων ὅ αὐτὸν λόγον, ᾧ νῦν πρὸς τὰ παρόντα χρῇ Antonin. Imp. εἰς ἑαυτὸν. l. 7. n. 6.

And as to my Family, are not they entituled to God's Protection, no less than my self? and hath he not hitherto taken care of them? how then can I imagine that he will not continue to do it? He provides now for both my self and them; and why not as well for them when I am gone?

gone? It may be I can leave them a comfortable Subsistence at my death. But if I cannot, why should I be troubled, so I can but leave them God's Blessing, which is far better than any temporal Legacy I can pretend to give them. By an unreasonable solicitude for them I may offend God, and so may wrong both my self and them; but I am certain I have no way to promote the welfare of either, like an unfeigned resignation of all my concerns to God's disposal, and a quiet expectation of Safety and Happiness from him alone.

This my concern for them may be very absurd, and which would appear so to my self, if I could but discover how Almighty God has determin'd to dispose of those I am so concerned for. It may be he designs that most or all of them should die before me; and then it is certainly a very needless solicitude that I have for their subsistence after my death. It may be he sees a mean beginning to be the best way for them to rise and flourish in the World, and that if they had been more plentifully provided for at the first they would have been apt to grow idle and extravagant, and bring themselves into greater streights than they are like to meet with as they are. Or it may be again that he foresees some other Provision will be made for them, which I am not sensible of, some Inheritance like to fall to them, or some kind Friend that purposes to take care of them, or to bequeath a bountifull Legacy to them, or that has an advantage and wants only a convenient opportunity of helping them to some place of profit that may maintain them. Or it may be God sees a plentifull Provision of the things

of this life improper for them, and that they will do beſt, and be moſt mindfull of their duty, and moſt deſirous to work out the eternal Salvation of their Souls in a low condition; and why then ſhould I trouble my ſelf with an unaccountable fear leaſt God ſhould deal more graciouſly by them than I would have deſired of him. However the caſe be with them now, or whatever it is like to be ſome time hence, it is plain, all my ſolicitude cannot profit them againſt God's Will, but my Truſt in him *to take care of them* may very much profit both my ſelf and them. And indeed the trueſt, the greateſt, and moſt laſting kindneſs I can do them, as to their temporal concerns is to leave them intirely to his diſpoſal.

I confeſs, it is fit that each one endeavour after a prudent proviſion for himſelf and any that depend upon him, as he ſhall have opportunity. But when he doth what he can in this reſpect, it is very unreaſonable and abſurd not to caſt all farther Care upon God, but *to take* as much *thought for the morrow*, as if he had none but himſelf to take care of him. * *Sufficient to the day is the evil thereof*, the trouble and vexation that attends it; but when People will be doubling this by their own diſſatisfactions at preſent, and their groundleſs Fears and Jealouſies for the future, no wonder if they make themſelves very uneaſie. But then it is to be remembred, that this uneaſineſs is perfectly of their own procuring, not the Portion allotted them by Almighty God, but merely the reſult of their own folly; and ſo is a burden which they have ſenſeleſly laid upon themſelves, or at leaſt which they might quickly have avoided, if they would have

* S. Matt. 6. 34.

have been prevailed with to put their Truſt in God, as becomes good Chriſtians.

This is a ſecond Inſtance of the admirable benefit of *Caſting our Care upon God*, that it is a ſingular means of quieting our Minds in all conditions, rendring us leſs afraid of any dangers that threaten us, leſs concerned for any Evils that overtake us, and leſs apprehenſive of future Misfortunes.

SECT. III.

III. BUT it is yet farther uſeful for *entituling to a better State, when we ſhall be tranſlated hence.* To which purpoſe it conduces theſe three ways.

1. As it is a neceſſary part of Chriſtianity.
2. As it is a means of our greater progreſs in the other Duties of Religion.
3. As it is a ſingular Preparative for times of Perſecution.

1. As it is a neceſſary part of Chriſtianity, a Duty incumbent upon all that profeſs themſelves our Lord's Diſciples, which God has plainly and often required in Scripture, and the performance whereof he as certainly expects from us, as of any other branch of our Religion. It is * *through Faith and Patience*, a ſtedfaſt Dependance upon him, and a chearfull reſignation of our ſelves to his diſpoſal, to bear all that he ſhall lay upon us, that we muſt hope to *inherit* his ineſtimable *Promiſes*. We muſt not ſuffer our ſelves to be diſcouraged by whatſoever difficulties, muſt never † *caſt away our confidence in him*, if we would obtain

* Heb. 6. 12.

† c. 10 35.

tain *the great recompence of Reward*, laid up for his faithfull Disciples in another World. Having had such expreſs command to *cast all our Care upon him*, we may as well think to be saved without a love, or fear of him, or thankfulneſs for his Mercies, or whatever other Vertue, as without a conſcientious obſervance of this Command.

2. As it is a means of our greater progreſs in the other Duties of Religion. There is nothing ſerves more naturally to affright perſons from ſin, and to make them indefatigably induſtrious in the ways of Piety, than a continual ſenſe of God's Preſence with them, obſerving all their doings, to reward or puniſh them accordingly: For it is not eaſie to imagine, how they ſhould dare to indulge themſelves in any known iniquity when they call to mind that they are under his All-ſeeing Eye, and that not the leaſt of their miſcarriages can poſſibly eſcape his notice. This, if any thing in the World, will excite their utmoſt diligence in *exerciſing themſelves to have always conſciences void of offence both towards God, and towards Man.*

But now this ſenſe of God's Preſence with us is no way ſo well kept up in our Souls, as by a continual reliance upon, and application to him for whatſoever we ſtand in need of. It can never be that we ſhould forget that infinite Being, to whom we are perpetually looking up for his Bleſſing, and whom we are taught to addreſs our ſelves to upon all occaſions for relief, but withall, whoſe Favour we are to hope for no longer than we are careful to obſerve his Will.

Whence it comes to paſs, that our very Wants and Calamities, Fears and Dangers become a means

means of our better Obedience, by reminding us of the Relation we ſtand in to Almighty God, the Benefits we receive from him, and the returns of Homage that he expects from us. For howſoever any may encourage themſelves in their Wickedneſs, whilſt they have eſtranged the thoughts of God from their Minds, they will very hardly know how to continue this their perverſeneſs, when they remember they are immediately going to offer up their Supplications to him, for ſome good thing they want at his Hands. The meditation hereof will make them aſhamed to diſpleaſe him, conſidering the daily Benefits his Bounty ſupplys them with; and afraid alſo to do it, leaſt ſo he ſhould be provoked to with-hold his Hand, and deny them what they come next to petition him for, or perhaps to ſend them away with a Curſe inſtead of a Bleſſing.

It is very ſerviceable likewiſe for affecting our Souls with a ſenſe of the numerous Bleſſings we daily partake of, and hereby for enflaming them with the love of our ſo infinitely generous Benefactor, and an unfeigned gratitude to him for all his unſpeakable Loving-kindneſs. It teaches to ſue to him beforehand for what we need, and when we have obtained it, fills our Mouths with hearty Songs of Praiſe and Thankſgiving for it.

And by how much the eaſier it renders us under all Afflictions, ſo much the more it contributes to a ready and chearfull performance of our Duty in all reſpects. It engages us to ſtudy *what return we ſhall make the Lord, for all the benefits that he hath done unto us*, and leaves us free to apply our ſelves to whatever acknowledgments we believe he looks for from us. By not ſuffe-

ring us to be overwhelmed with grief in any case, it preserves our Faculties in their due liberty, and so disposes us to hearken to God's Will, and forthwith to set about the performance of it beyond what might otherwise have been hoped for. And being thus usefull an Instrument in order to an holiness of Conversation, it must necessarily be owned to be of great importance, for entituling to an eternal state of Happiness.

3. As it is a singular Preparative for times of Persecution. Which how intolerable soever in it self, loses a very considerable part of its weight, when it falls upon such as are in a readiness to receive it. It is a great support amidst the most formidable Terrours, to have learned to place our Trust in God as an impregnable Defence against all the assaults of the most inveterate Adversary, assuring our selves, that far * *greater is he that is with us, than he that is in the world*; and that therefore, † *if God be on our side*, we need not much concern our selves who shall, *who can be against us*. For as he is ready at all times to *take care of them that cast their Care upon him*, so doth he it in an especial manner, whenever he sees them willing to expose themselves to hardships for his Name's sake. He will either deliver them out of the Hands of their Enemies, or if he sees it best that they suffer by them, will turn their Sufferings to their advantage, causing that their *light afflictions, which are* comparatively *but for a moment, shall work out for them* ‖ *a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.*

* 1 S. Jo. 4. 4. & 2 Kings 6. 16.

† Rom. 8. 31.

‖ Καθ' ὑπερβολὴν εἰς ὑπερβολὴν αἰώνιον βάρος δόξης. 2 Cor. 4. 17.

* S. Matt. 10. 28. * *Fear not them*, saith our Saviour, *which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather*

rather fear him, who is able to deſtroy both body and ſoul in hell. And if ye ſuffer for righteouſneſs ſake, ſaith S. *Peter,* * *happy are ye; and be not afraid of their terrour, neither be troubled; but ſanctifie ye the Lord God in your hearts.* And again, † *If any man ſuffer as a Chriſtian let him not be aſhamed, but let him glorifie God in this behalf; and let them that ſuffer according to the will of God, commit the keeping of their ſouls to him in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator.*

* 1 Ep. 3. 14, 15.

† c. 4. 16, 19.

And of how great importance it is in order to the eternal Salvation of our Souls, thus to cleave to, and reſt upon God, though in the midſt of Tribulations and Tortures, chuſing to undergo the utmoſt Barbarities (if called to it) rather than depart from our Integrity, our bleſſed Lord ſufficiently enforms us in theſe words. ‖ *Whoſoever ſhall confeſs me before men, him will I confeſs alſo before my father which is in heaven; but whoſoever ſhall deny me before men, him will I alſo deny before my father which is in heaven.* Or as it is expreſſed in S. *Mark*'s Goſpel, * *Whoſoever ſhall be aſhamed of me, and of my words, in this adulterous and ſinful generation, of him alſo ſhall the ſon of man be aſhamed, when he cometh in the glory of his father, with the holy Angels.* As much as to ſay, 'He that owns our Savi-'our's Goſpel, and is neither aſhamed nor afraid to 'profeſs its Doctrines, and obſerve its Precepts, in 'ſpight of all oppoſition, ſhall be ſure to receive 'an abundant Reward at the laſt day; but they 'who are timorous and faint-hearted, and can-'not hold out in times of tryal, muſt expect a 'different portion, even the eternal Vengeance of 'Almighty God, to be poured forth upon them, 'as a juſt recompence of their defection from him.

‖ S. Matt. 10. 32, 33.

* S. Mar. 8. 38.

Well

Well therefore might the ancient Professors of our Faith resolve with the Apostle S. *Paul*, That * *neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature should separate them from the love of God in Christ Jesus*, and from a resolute obedience to his Gospel. Nay, so cautious were they in this respect, that they not only refused to deny the Faith upon any terms, but would expose themselves to the utmost, rather than do what might be misconstrued a denial of it. Insomuch that when † *Julian* set himself to beguile those by subtilty, whom he could not force to Idolatry, they that understood the cheat, chose rather to suffer for forbearing to pay their accustomed Homage to the Emperour, than do what would be interpreted an act of Adoration to the Images of *Jupiter*, and *Mars*, and *Mercury*, which he had purposely ordered to be placed by his own Chair, to the end, that when the Christians bowed after their wonted manner to himself, they might be represented as doing it to these. And when, again, ‖ at the bestowing of Donatives amongst his Army, they that stood by the Emperour, commanded the Souldiers as they came, *to throw a little Frankincense into the Fire* (as the manner of the *Romans* was in the worship of their Gods) the more intelligent utterly refused it, and the rest being afterwards told, that in complying herein

* Rom. 8. 38, 39.

Has cogitationes quæ persecutio potest vincere? quæ possunt tormenta superare? Durat fortis & stabilis, religiosis meditationibus fundata mens: & adversus omnes Diaboli terrores, & minas mundi, animus immobilis perstat, quem futurorum fides certa & solida corroborat. *D. Cypr. de exhortat. Martyr.* Hoc est esse discipulum Dei, hoc est militem Christi, quem nullus hostis expugnet, nullus lupus de castris cœlestibus rapiat, nullus laqueus inducat, nullus dolor vincat, nullus cruciatus affligat. *Lact. de mort. persecut. c.* 16.

† Sozom. Hist. l. 5. c. 15.

‖ Greg. Naz. Steletut. 1.

herein they had denied Christ, and worshipped Idols, they immediately look'd like Men half dead, and running forth, as if they were besides themselves, they publickly owned themselves Christians, with Tears and Cries, declaring that what they had done was meerly by surprize, returning the Emperour his Money, and begging Death at his Hand as due to their Apostacy.

Thus S. * *Cyprian* tells of a certain Woman named *Bona*, that being drawn by her Husband to offer Sacrifice, which she did not of her self, but as her Hands were overpower'd by others, and made to do it, she presently disclaimed the fact, as theirs only who had offered her this Violence, and so submitted to banishment, rather than undergo the scandal of being thought to have fallen from the Faith, when she had not.

* Epist. 14.

And I have † already observed how multitudes of others willingly offered themselves to undergo all kinds of Tortures for their Saviour's sake, ‖ discovering a kind of impatience for a Crown of Martyrdom, and even tyring out the Cruelty of their outrageous Persecutors; insomuch that *Arius Antonius* having undertaken to persecute those in *Asia*, and seeing them so little terrify'd at the Severities executed upon their Brethren, that they came flocking by troops to receive the like Sentence, astonished at this their unparallell'd Courage he put a stop to his proceedings, and dismiss'd them, * saying, Ὦ δυσκολοι εἰ θέλετε ἀποθνήσκειν κρημνὸς ἢ βρόχος ὑμῖν ἔστω, *Be gone, ye wretches, and since you are so fond of Death,*

† Sect. 2. n. 2.

‖ Steterunt torti torquentibus fortiores; & pulsantes ac laniantes ungulas pulsata ac laniata membra vicerunt. *D. Cyprian. Epist.* 10. Neque tunc civitas Christi, quamvis adhuc peregrinaretur in terris, & haberet tam magnorum agmina populorum, adversus impios persecutores suos pro temporali salute pugnavit, sed potius ut obtineret æternam, non repugnavit. *D. August. de civ. Dei. l.* 22. *c.* 6. Inter fatigatos carnifices. *Lactant. Inst. l.* 5. *c.* 13.

* Tertul. ad Scap.

either

either hang your selves, or break your own Necks.

Some indeed there were, who for want of a due Dependance upon God, when Persecutions threatened them, sought to save themselves by pretending to have complied with what was required of them, though in truth they had not, * procuring Certificates to testifie that they had done it, in hope by this deceitful Artifice to find the better quarter amongst the Enemies of the Christian Name. † Some would venture to subscribe a Profession that they were of the Worshippers of *Jupiter* and *Mars*, and the rest of the Heathen Deities, that this being shewn to their Persecutors might obtain their quiet. Others who dared not to proceed thus far, yet would ‖ not discountenance any Libels or Tickets that were either sent them by the Magistrates, or procured them by any of their Friends, but would make use of them in order to their Peace. And * a third sort there was, who would buy them, who though they would not go up to the Capitol to offer Sacrifice, would fee some Officer there, to suborn another to do it in their stead, or to procure a Certificate of their having done it, when they had not, or some other way to get them excused from doing it, yet so as that they might pass amongst those who had.

But these indirect and unwarrantable Courses the better Christians utterly condemned, censuring them as † unlawful and wicked, comparing the users of them to those who actually worshipped at the Heathen Altars, construing

* Qui seipsos infideles illicitâ nefariorum Libellorum professione prodiderant, quasi evasuri irretientes illos Diaboli laqueos viderentur. *D. Cypr. Epist.* 30.

† Annot. Oxon. in loc.

‖ Ibid.

* Ibid. & Epist. 55. Vid. & Annot. in lib. de lapsis, p. 133.

† Illicita nefariorum, &c. *Ut supra.*

Quo non minus quàm si ad nefarias aras accessissent,— tenerentur. *Ibid.*

ing their Profeſſion of having denied Chriſt, to be indeed one way of denying him, charging them as vertually the doers of what any elſe had done at their inſtigation, and on their behalf, and endeavouring to make them ſenſible that they had herein choſen to *ſerve Man rather than God*, and that God (whom they had thus affronted) would be ſure to take notice of it, and bring them to an account for it.

Illa profeſſio denegantis, conteſtatio eſt Chriſtiani, quod fuerat, abnuentis: feciſſe ſe dixit, quicquid alius faciendo commiſit. *De Lapſis.*

Servivit ſeculari Domino, qui obtemperavit ejus edicto; magis obaudivit humano imperio, quàm Deo. *Ibid.*

Deum tamen judicem ſubterfugere & vitare non poterit. *Ibid.*

And what they thus diſapproved of in others they were very carefull to avoid themſelves. They were * *prepared to endure Impriſonment, and were armed againſt the fear of Death; they valiantly reſiſted the World, they were a glorious ſpectacle in the ſight of God, and an eminent pattern for the imitation of ſucceeding Chriſtians.* † *Whilſt part of them actually laid down their lives for their bleſſed Saviour, others were ready to do it upon the firſt occaſion. They were generally prepared and animated for their ſpiritual Combat, as became the Souldiers of Chriſt, that the uncorrupted ſoundneſs of their Faith might neither be allured by Flatteries, nor terrified by Menaces, nor overcome by Racks and Tortures.* ‖ *They were above the dread of Hunger, and deſpiſed Thirſt, and undervalued the filth of the Priſon, and the horror of their Puniſhment. They overcame their Sufferings, were out*

* Parati ad patientiam carceris, armati ad tolerantiam mortis; repugnatis fortiter ſeculo, ſpectaculum glorioſum præbuiſtis Deo, ſecuturis fratribus fuiſtis exemplo. *Ibid.*

† Quoſdam jam comperi coronatos, quoſdam vero ad victoriæ coronam proximos, univerſos autem, quos agmine glorioſo carcer incluſit, pari ac ſimili calore virtutis ad gerendum certamen animatos; ſicut eſſe oportet in divinis caſtris milites Chriſti, ut incorruptam fidei firmitatem non blanditiæ decipiant, non minæ terreant, non cruciatus ac tormenta devincant. *D. Cypr. Ep.* 10.

‖ Famem vincitis, & ſitim ſpernitis, &c. *Ep.* 37.

their

their Torments, and did not fear Death, but wish for it, as being vanquished by the hope of an immortal Reward, that he which conquers may be crowned with an eternal Life.

And there is the same reason for persisting still in a resolute adherence to our Religion, and all the parts of it, notwithstanding the utmost attempts of Men or Devils for enticing or affrighting from it, the same obligation willingly to expose our selves to whatever hardships for our Saviour's sake, the same encouragement to them that come off Victors in the Christian Warfare, and the same danger to him that is overcome. And if they who know thus much, have not the Courage to demean themselves accordingly, this can be imputed to nothing else, but too great love to the things of this World, and too little affiance in Almighty God.

If God's Promises be either not believed, or not attended to, what better can be expected, than that People should be startled at every appearance of danger? If their Dependance be more upon this Life's Enjoyments, than upon God, it is a vanity to think they will ever be perswaded to venture the loss of these for his sake. They may be willing to serve him, and may seem to do it with great eagerness, whilst they can do it safely; but when their Estates, or it may be their Lives are at stake, they will conclude it necessary to take care of these in the first place. * There is nothing that they apprehend requisite to this purpose, but a fear of suffering will be apt to put them upon, though in direct opposition to their known Duty. At least it will byas their Judgments, and make them ready to hearken

* Vera igitur Ciceronis illa sententia est; nemo, inquit, justus potest esse, qui mortem, qui exilium, qui egestatem timet. *Lactant. Instit. l. 6. c. 17. & Cic. de Offic. l. 2. c. 11.*

hearken to whatever has the ſhew of an Argument, for encouraging them in the proſecution of what they conceive may moſt probably anſwer their deſign. Some way or other they will be ſure to conſult their preſent Intereſt and Safety, whatſoever the conſequence may be in another ſtate. The dread they have of being miſerable, will excite them to try all means poſſible for preventing it, without troubling themſelves to enquire over nicely about the lawfulneſs of them.

Whereas, on the contrary, no ſooner hath a Man learned to repoſe his truſt in God, as becomes a good Chriſtian, but he thenceforward undervalues all things elſe in compariſon of an Intereſt in his Favour. He knows whom he hath to rely upon, and how little all his own attempts will ſignifie without the Divine Bleſſing, which he can have no reaſon to expect, whilſt he goes out of God's way to ſave himſelf; and again, how little all the malice of his violenteſt Adverſaries can hurt him without God's permiſſion. And when things ſeem at worſt, it is a great eaſe to his Mind to reflect, that the Caſe may poſſibly be much better than it appears to him, there may be a means of eſcape that he is not aware of, or ſome conſiderable mitigation of his Fears or Sorrows which he is not ſenſible of, but which when he ſhall come to underſtand it, will give him cauſe to rejoice at what has befallen him.

Or come the greateſt hardſhip that can be, he is ſure of an ineffable, unconceivable recompence for it, that if he be * *ſtedfaſt and unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, his labour ſhall not be in vain in the Lord*, but ſhall advance him to an heavenly *Crown of glory* &c.

* 1 Cor. 15. ult.

glory that fadeth not away; and consequently, that it must argue an intolerable weakness and want of Judgment not to secure to himself this inestimable Prize, though it were by wading through a Sea of Blood.

So that upon the whole matter it is evident, that a conscientious practice of this Duty is our readiest means of security, against all Evils from whatsoever Quarter, our only *Palladium*, which whilst we safely retain, there can be no danger of miscarrying. It is * the wisest method we can take in order to our own happiness at present, and for pleasing Almighty God, and obtaining a share in those eternal Rewards, which are promised to all his faithful Servants in another World. It is a kind of Heaven upon Earth, a foretast of those incomparable Joys, whereto we desire or hope to be advanced in a future state.

* Habemus maximum tuæ fomitem salutis, veram de Dei gubernatione sententiam, quod eam non casuum temeritati, sed divinæ rationi subditam credis. *Boet. de Consol. l.* 1. *pros.* 6.

And indeed, had persons but once arrived at this happy temper of Mind, to be able to put their Trust wholly in God, and comfort themselves in his All-sufficiency, and his readiness to relieve them, what an invincible Support would this be to them under their heaviest Crosses and Calamities? What an abatement of all their fearful Expectations? and with what refreshing hopes of a seasonable redress, might they be enabled calmly to bear any the greatest disasters that befall them? Could we but all bring our selves to this pass, we might bid defiance to whatever threatens us, as not able to make us miserable, so long as our sure Trust is in *the Rock of Ages*, and

and a never-failing Strength, might cry but with the before-mentioned S. *Cyprian*, * *Quis ei de sæculo metuit est, cui in sæculo Deus tutor est?* What can he fear from the World, who whilst he continues in it has God for his Guardian? and might resolve with the Prophet *Habakkuk*, That † *although the fig-tree should not blossom, nor fruit should be in the vine, though the labour of the olive should fail, and the field should yield no meat; though the flock should be cut off from the fold, and there should be no herd in the stall; yet we would rejoice in the Lord, and joy in the God of our Salvation.* || *He is* a ready, *a very present help in the time of trouble.* And could we but look upon him as our Rock and Refuge, and stedfastly repose our Trust in him as such, we should not need to fear, * *though the earth were to be moved, and the hills to be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof should rage and swell, and the mountains shake at the tempest of the same.* Nay, † *Si fractus illabatur Orbis*, Though the whole World should crack and break in pieces about our Ears, yet were there no cause to be dismay'd if we could but assure our selves that nothing should befall us, even in this confusion. but what should some way be turned to our benefit. Of such unspeakable advantage is this Duty to all that are rightly exercised in it. It is the best recommendation to the Divine Blessing and Protection, the best Antidote against needless Fears and Cares, the best support under Pressures and Calamities, the best Preservation against the prevalency of those Temptations, whereby the diffident and distrustfull of God's Providence are sure to be overcome; and in a word, it is the best and surest

* De Orat. Dom.

† c. 3. 17, 18.

|| Ps. 46. 1.

* v. 2, 3.

† Horat. l. Od. 3.

way to be Happy both here and hereafter. This is that compleat Security, that perfect Satisfaction and Safety mentioned by the Prophet *Isaiah*, as annexed to a steady Reliance upon God, c. 26. 3. *Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee*; and for this very reason, *because he trusteth in thee.*

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

The Weakneſs and Incompetency of all Natural Means.

IT remains that I proceed to the laſt Argument I mentioned, for inviting to *caſt our Care upon God*; that is to ſay, *The Inſufficiency of all other helps for either ſecuring us from, or ſupporting us under Afflictions.* Now theſe may be conſidered in a twofold reſpect; 1. Barely as Natural Means, and which may lawfully be made uſe of, as we have occaſion; 2. Or as they may be unlawfull, and which cannot therefore be ventured upon without ſin. And accordingly in treating of them I ſhall endeavour to evince,

1. The Weakneſs and Incompetency of the former; and,
2. The Evil and Danger of the latter.

SECT. I.

I. *THE Weakneſs and Incompetency of all Natural means,* [a] which how promiſing ſoever, will never ſtand us in ſtead without the Divine concurrence, but perhaps may fail us when we have moſt need of their Aſſiſtance. They may ſeem very proper and advantageous, but if God with-

[a] Sunt infida quædam refugia, ad quæ cum quis aufugerit, magis infirmatur, quàm confirmatur. *D. Auguſt. in Pſal.* 45. *v.* 1.

with-hold his Bleſſing they muſt needs prove ineffectual, and ſo all our greateſt Expectations from them muſt become abortive. * *He ſtretcheth forth the heavens alone, and ſpreadeth abroad the earth by himſelf; he fruſtrateth the tokens of liars, and maketh diviners mad, turneth the wiſe men backward, and maketh their knowledge fooliſh;* † *bringeth the counſel of the heathen to nought, and maketh the devices of the people to be of none effect.* It is upon him alone that all our beſt Endeavours, and moſt uſefull Projects depend intirely for ſucceſs; and though whilſt they are employed only as Inſtruments of his Providence, in order to our welfare, there is juſt reaſon to hope for a good Concluſion of them, yet if they come once to be ſeparated from, or ſet in oppoſition to the Determinations of Providence, the caſe is quite altered, and no marvel if they then meet with a croſs event. All-ſufficiency is to be found in none but the Almighty Creator, the beſt of other Beings being liable to manifold defects and imperfections, and depending wholly upon him for both their Subſiſtence and their Power of Operation; and therefore to rely upon any thing elſe than him for ſafety, is but to *truſt in the ſtaff of a broken reed, whereon, if a man lean it will go into his hand, and pierce it.*

* Iſ. 44. 24, 25.

† Pſal. 33. 10.

All our Abilities, or whatſoever Advantages for helping our ſelves are but the Gift of God, and act in ſubordination to his Will and ſo far only as he is pleaſed to give them leave. He obſerves and governs them all, and it is but with him to countermand their Proceeding, and it is preſently at an end. ‖ *His is the greatneſs, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majeſty; for all that is in the heaven and in the earth*

‖ 1 Chron. 29. 11, 12.

earth is his, his is the Kingdom, and he is exalted as head above all. Both riches and honour come of him, and he reigneth over all, and in his hand is power and might; in his hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all. Wherefore, since the Stream can in no case rise above the Fountain, and in this case falls infinitely below it, it is very apparent, that all inferiour helps are not to be regarded any farther than the Divine Providence may be expected to promote their Efficacy; and that it is therefore an instance of intolerable weakness, for any to look no higher than these for safety, which are not more likely to answer our Designs when rightly improved, and with a due reverence to and dependance upon the first mover and cause of all things, than they are sure to deceive such as place all their Trust in them.

And thus much Experience also testifies, shewing beyond all contradiction, that it is not Mens own foresight, or labour, or outward advantages of whatever kind that brings their purposes to effect, but the Blessing and Goodness of Almighty God. For hence it comes to pass, * that *the race is not always to the swift, nor the battel to the strong; neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor favour to men of skill, but time and chance happeneth to them all.* God reserves to himself a power to interpose, and cross, and alter the wonted course of things, whereby to awaken persons to a consideration of himself, and dependance upon him, and therefore orders matters so, that though they usually happen according to the probability of second Causes, sometimes they are observed to fall out quite otherwise. So that when Men

* Eccles. 9. 11.

have done all they can, and with the faireſt and reaſonableſt expectation of ſucceſs, they many times fail of their End they know not how.

There is a ſecret uncontroulable Providence that takes occaſion to preſent extraordinary opportunities, and offers advantages on the one hand, or lays impediments in the way on the other, which no humane Wiſdom could foreſee or provide againſt. And this gives ſucceſs to very unlikely Means, defeating the ſwift and the ſtrong, and the wiſe, and the politick, and them that are beſt verſed in Men and Buſineſs, baulking them of their Hopes, and fruſtrating their Deſigns. Whereas, if any Humane Means were of force enough to anſwer Men's Deſires without the help of a ſuperiour Power, it could not be that they ſhould ſo frequently miſcarry, when in all appearance they are the beſt diſpoſed that can be. And this therefore is a plain proof of the vanity and folly of truſting to theſe, without having conſtant recourſe to Almighty God for his Bleſſing upon them, and reſting upon him to give them the deſired ſucceſs. Thus much in general.

But that the Inſufficiency of all Natural Means of Safety may be made yet more apparent, it will not be amiſs to deſcend to a more particular conſideration of them: And I take it they may be all reduced to theſe four Heads,

I. Wealth.

II. Power.

III. A Man's own Abilities and Induſtry, his Strength, Courage, Skill and Ingenuity, and Diligence in the uſe of all theſe.

IV. The kind Aſſiſtances of Friends.

1. The

I. The first is Wealth; Which, as the Wiseman speaks, * *is the rich man's strong city, and as an high wall in his own conceit.* It is that which he reckons will answer all things, will supply all his needs, will uphold and assist him in all Difficulties, will give him the advantage over those that set themselves against him, will create him Friends in time of danger and distress, will secure him from fear of want, and will be to him instead of all other helps. Yet this, as much dependance as there is upon it, will be found to be very defective, if it be observed that,

* Prov. 16. 11.

1. It is but a partial help (as the rest also are) and † will not reach to all Cases, nor administer a Salve for all Sores, a cure for all Maladies; nor is it any kind of Relief against divers of the severest Afflictions whereto Mankind are liable. The greatest Treasures cannot prevent a fit of the Gout, or Stone, or Cholick, or Fever, nor remove any other Distemper of the Body, nor heal a wounded Conscience, nor recover a lost Member, nor deliver from Death, nor *profit in the day of Wrath.* Riches are a great Blessing of God, and for the most part tend considerably to facilitate the Owner's passage through this World; and the greater share therefore any have of them, the more cause they have to be thankfull for them. But seeing there are great troubles of different kinds for which these afford no remedy, it is a necessary piece of Prudence, to look after some other more substantial Support, that may stand us in stead where these fail,

† Non domus & fundus, non æris acervus & auri
Ægroto Domini deducit corpore febres,
Non animo curas.
Horat. Epist. 2. *l.* 1.

Nec calidæ citius decedunt corpore febres
Textilibus si in picturis, ostroq; rubenti
Jactaris, quàm si plebeia in veste cubandum est.
Lucret. l. 2.

2. Where a Man's wealth is most helpfull, it is but a very uncertain Comfort, because he knows not how soon he may possibly be deprived of it. * *Riches make themselves wings and fly away as an eagle towards heaven.* They are a transient deceitfull Possession, that like the Apples † of *Sodom* seem beautifull and enticing at a distance, but being handled, turn presently into Dust or Smoak, and so do us many times little or no good. ‖ After a Man has undergone a course of hard labour for many years together, has busied his Brain in designing, and his Limbs in acting, that if possible he might advance himself, and perhaps has at length had the good fortune to obtain his aim, he knows not how soon he may be reduced to his former, or a worse condition. If his Soul be not immediately required of him, as the rich Man's in * S. *Luke*'s Gospel was, when he had been just now contriving to enlarge his Barns, and take his ease, and enjoy himself; yet all his store upon which he so highly values himself, may be taken away from him, and he may have but little *profit of all the labour that he hath taken under the sun.* Instances † are numerous in all Ages, of persons who from the greatest plenty, whether by the immediate hand of God against them for their Sins, or by the malice or treachery of other Men, or by their own Luxury and Imprudence, have been strangely reduced to a low state, to the great amazement of the Beholders,

* Prov. 23. 5.

† Χρόαν μὲν ἔχουσι τοῖς ἐδωδέμοις ὁμοίαν, δρεψαμένων δὲ χερσὶν, εἰς καπνὸν διαλύονται, καὶ τέφραν. Joseph. ἰουδ. ἀλωσ. l. 4. c. 27. Duo ibi oppida Sodomum nominatum alterum, alterum Gomorrum: apud quæ pomum gignitur, quod habeat speciem licet maturitatis, mandi tamen non potest. *Solin. Polyhist. c. 48. Edit. Basil.*

‖ Quicquid longa series multis laboribus, multâ Deûm indulgentiâ struxit, id unus dies spargit ac dissipat. *Senec. Epist. 91.*

* c. 12. 16, &c.

† Κροῖσος μὲν γὰρ εἶχεν εὔιππον γῆν, Πολυκράτης δὲ εὐνέων θάλατταν· ἀλλ' οὐδὲν τούτων βέβαιον, οὐκ ἡ γὴ Κροίσῳ, οὐκ ἡ θάλασσα Πολυκράτει, &c. Max. Tyr. dissert. 35.

ders. Fires, losses at Sea, or miscarriage at home, the wickedness of a perjured Villain, the rapine of an Enemy, some flaw in a Title, some part of an Estate unjustly detained, or some extravagant Humour of his own, is enough to impoverish a Man in a little time, though at present he seem to be as far from it as any. But where these and other like Causes concurr, as oftentimes many of them do, though one had the Wealth of *Crœsus* he could not prevent his own ruine. Thus it pleases God † *to shew* more *strength with his arm, and to scatter the proud* who are puffed up at the thoughts of their large Estates, *in the imagination of their hearts, putting down the mighty from their seats, and exalting them of low degree, filling the hungry with good things, and sending the rich*, in the mean time, *empty away.*

* Nempe dat & quodcunque libet fortuna, rapitq; Lucus & est subito, qui modo Crœsus erat. *Ovid. Trist. l. 3. el. 7.*

† Luk. 1. 51, 52, 53.

3. A plentiful Fortune is not only an imperfect and uncertain Comfort to the Owner, but it is many times an apparent means of his Ruine. *There is a sore evil, saith Solomon, that I have seen under the sun, namely, riches kept for the Owners thereof to their hurt, but those riches perish by evil travail, and he begetteth a son, and there is nothing in his hand. As he came forth of his mother's womb, naked shall he return to go as he came, and shall take nothing of his labour which he may carry away in his hand. And this also is a sore evil, that in all points as he came, so shall he go, and what profit hath he that he hath laboured for the wind? All his days also he eateth in darkness, and he hath much sorrow and wrath with his sickness.* Where the Preacher not only declares that the rich Man's Wealth shall not accompany him into

‖ Eccles. 5. 13, 14, 15, 16, 17.

to

to the other World, but affirms moreover, that in the mean time it frequently creates him a great deal of Care and Anxiety, and Fear, and Danger, and * perhaps is the cauſe of his death at laſt, exciting Thieves, or his own Servants, or it may be his Children or other his Relations to diſpatch him out of the way, to the end they may divide the Spoil amongſt themſelves. Or elſe it expoſes him to the Malice or Covetouſneſs of ſome great Perſon, whom he is in no capacity to withſtand. † Which was the caſe of *Naboth*, the fairneſs and convenience of whoſe Vineyard made *Ahab* uneaſie for want of it, and thereby put *Jezebel* upon contriving his death to obtain it. So ‖ *Longinus*'s plentiful Revenues, and *Seneca*'s ſtately and pleaſant Gardens coſt each of them his life, which they loſt only by having ſo tempting a Bait for the greedy Tyrant. And thus it often happens, that an * overgrown Eſtate raiſes the Envy of ſome, and works upon the Avarice of others, and ſo the Poſſeſſor comes to pay dearly for it. For in the concluſion, either he is ſecretly murdered, or (which is worſe) is taken † off by falſe Accuſation and a pretence of Juſtice, and ſo is made to ſuffer in his Life, in his Eſtate, and in his Reputation all at once, whilſt his poor Neighbours that have

* Nam illud præterea quàm multi perierint poſſeſſionum, aut opum gratiâ. *Lactant. de mort. perſecut. c. 7.*

† 1 King. 21. 4. v. 9, &c.

‖ ——Juſſuq; Neronis Longinum & magnos Senecæ prædivitis hortos Clauſit, & egregias Lateranorum obſidet ædes Tota cohors. *Juv. Sat. 10.*

* Sed plures nimiâ congeſta pecunia curâ Strangulat. *Ibid.*

† Ubicunq; cultiorem agrum viderat [*Diocleſianus*] aut ornatius ædificium, jam parata Domino calumnia, & pœna capitalis. *Lactant. de mort. perſec. c. 7.* Cum opus eſſet [*Maximiano Herc.*] non deerant locupletiſſimi ſenatores, qui ſubornatis indiciis affectaſſe imperium dicerentur, ita ut effoderentur aſſiduè lumina Senatus. *Ibid. c. 8.*

no such inviting prey for the rapacious Harpies, live safely by him unmolested. And this difference proceeding only from their differing Circumstances, it is a natural and easie Consequence, that Wealth can be but a feeble Support of it self, which sometimes makes Mens Lives the pleasanter, and their passage through this World the more agreeable, but which at other times becomes an occasion of their fall, and perhaps of undoing their whole Family together with them.

It was therefore good Advice in point of Prudence, as well as a necessary Caution in point of Duty, which the Apostle directs to *Timothy*, to give the rich Men of the World in charge, * *That they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us all things richly to enjoy.* As the *Psalmist* also long before had taught not to depend upon unjust gain, nor even upon that which is better gotten, for fear of a disappointment from it. † *O trust not in wrong and robbery, or if riches encrease*, though by lawful means, *set not your heart upon them. God spake once, and twice I have heard the same, that Power belongeth unto God.* Power belongeth unto God, and he will do more abundantly for all that trust in him, than can be expected from the greatest affluence of worldly Wealth. To this purpose saith the Wise-man, ‖ *He that trusteth in his riches shall fall, but the righteous shall flourish as a branch.* The one shall thrive and prosper by the good hand of God upon him, but the other, notwithstanding all his Confidence, shall decay and perish like a withered Leaf. So much safer is it to place our hope in God, than in all earthly Treasures.

* 1 Tim. 6. 17.

† Psal. 62. 10, 11.

‖ Prov. 11. 28.

These

These are at beſt but * imperfect deceitfull helps, and which frequently prove burdens and temptations, and are dangerous and deſtructive to the Owner: but God is a ſure Defence, that never fails; † *His name is a ſtrong tower, whereunto the righteous may freely run, and be ſafe* from thoſe Evils, againſt which no ſtore of Riches could ſecure him.

* Opum magna vis eſt mihi. Anceps & onerosa fœlicitas, & quæ plus invidiæ ſit habitura quam gaudii. — Opes multas habeo. Habes rem quæſitu difficilem, cuſtoditu anxiam, amiſſu flebilem. *Petrarch de rem. utr. fort. l. 1. Dial.* 53. Multis mortem attulere divitiæ, requiem fere omnibus abſtulere. *Ibid.*

† Prov. 18. 10.

II. A ſecond means of Safety is Power. And indeed whereſoever there is a ſufficient Stock of this, there is uſually no great cauſe of Fear. For if I be incomparably ſtronger than another, and ſo better able to defend my ſelf againſt him than he is to hurt me, I ſhall ordinarily have but little reaſon to be afraid of his attempts, which I am thus far qualified to defeat. They may occaſion me ſome trouble, but will hardly prevail againſt me, whilſt I am capacitated thus effectually to withſtand them, ſo I will but be at the pains of doing it. Thus much is plain.

And yet it is as plain, that there are ſome Caſes, wherein the greateſt Humane Power is a very incompetent Security; and particularly there are theſe three.

1. The caſe of common Mortality, from which Kings and Emperours, and the greateſt and moſt famous Conquerors are no more exempt than the reſt of Mankind. They are but Men, like others, ‖ ſubject to the uſual Infirmities of Humane Nature, and muſt therefore expect to be ſick and die as well as they. Nor will all their

‖ Pallida mors æquo pede pulſat pauperum tabernas, Regumq; turres. *Horat. l. 1. od.* 4. Et magna tirulis fulgeat domus,

their Grandeur procure them one hour's reprieve when the fatal time comes; but perhaps may be an occaſion of ſhortening their days, by engaging them in bold and hazardous undertakings, which not ſucceeding, may bring them to an untimely end. * *I have ſaid ye are Gods, ſaith the Pſalmiſt, and all of you are children of the moſt high. But ye ſhall die like men, and fall like one of the princes.*

Mors ſpernit altam gloriam.
Involvit humile pariter, & celſum caput,
Æquatque ſummis infima.
Boet. de conſol. philoſ. l. 2. Metr. 7.

* Pſal. 82. 6, 7.

2. The caſe of a ſudden Surprize, which many times overturns the whole Scene of Affairs, beyond what could ever have been imagined. By this the moſt puiſſant Generals, with their Armies, are ever and anon baffled, and made to yield to a very unequal Enemy, and whom they could otherwiſe have deſpiſed as not worthy of their regard. By this the moſt potent Prince falls a Prey to the Avarice, or Malice, or Ambition of ill-deſigning Men; but whom, had he been aware of their Intentions, he could without any trouble have put beyond all thoughts of Injuring himſelf or any elſe. Nor is it poſſible to prevent the miſchief that often enſues upon unexpected Accidents, or ſome ſubtile undiſcovered Stratagems, though a Man be never ſo powerfull in all reſpects.

3. The Caſe of the Divine Interpoſal, when God has ſome wiſe Ends to bring about by defeating the too confident Expectations of the greateſt Potentates, and blaſting their likelieſt undertakings. † For *he poureth contempt upon princes, and weakeneth the ſtrength of the mighty,* ‖ *breaking them in pieces without number, and ſetting up others in their ſtead.* All Perfection of Power

† Job 12. 21.

‖ c. 34. 24.

* Is. 40. 15. Power is in him alone, * *all the nations* of the World being in comparison of him, but *as the drop of a bucket, or as the small dust of the balance*, in no wise able to put the least stop to any thing he decrees. And accordingly he † advances or depresses, gives Success or denies it, grants Safety or sends Miseries and Calamities, as seems best to his infinite Wisdom, *and none*, not the haughtiest amongst all Mankind, ‖ *can stay his hand, or say unto him, what dost thou?* Men may summon together all their Forces, for their defence in time of danger, and may try to strengthen themselves by Foreign Aids, whereby to secure themselves the better; but when all is done, the Success depends solely upon God's good pleasure, in whose power it is to deal by them as himself sees fit.

† Ῥεῖα μὲν γὰρ βριάρει, ῥέα δὲ βριάοντα χαλέπτει·
Ῥεῖα γ' ἀρίζηλον μινύθει, καὶ ἄδηλον ἀέξει·
Ῥεῖα δὲ τ' ἰθύνει σκολιὸν, καὶ ἀγήνορα κάρφει
Ζεὺς ὑψιβρεμέτης, ὃς ὑπερτάτα δώματα ναίει.
Hesiod. ἐργ. καὶ ἡμ. l. 1.

‖ Dan. 4. 35.

* Prov. 21. 31. *The horse*, saith * *Solomon, is prepared against the day of battel, but safety is of the Lord.* And so

† Psal. 18. 32, &c. saith the *Psalmist*, † *It is God that girdeth me with strength, and maketh my way perfect. He maketh my feet like hinds feet, and setteth me upon my high-places. He teacheth my hands to war, so that a bow of steel is broken by mine arms. Thou hast also given me the shield of thy salvation; and thy right hand hath holden me up, and thy gentleness hath made me great. Thou hast enlarged my steps under me, that my feet did not slip. I have pursued mine Enemies, and overtaken them; neither did I turn again till they were consumed. I have wounded them, that they were not able to rise, they are fallen under my feet. For thou hast girded me with strength unto the battel; thou hast subdued under me those that rose up against me*, &c.

Where

Where the devout *Pſalmiſt* at large aſcribes all his Strength, and the Succeſs of it, all his Advantages over his Enemies, together with his ability for obtaining it, ſolely to the defence and aſſiſtance of the Almighty. He knew very well, that *it was not his own Sword*, nor his own Arm that brought him this Salvation, *but God's right hand, and his arm, and the light of his countenance*, becauſe he had an Intereſt in his *Favour*. And therefore ſaith he at another time, * *Some truſt in chariots, and ſome in horſes, but we will remember the name of the Lord our God. They are brought down and fallen, but we are riſen and ſtand upright.* And again at another, † *I will not truſt in my bow, neither ſhall my ſword ſave me. But thou haſt ſaved us from our enemies, and haſt put them to ſhame that hated us. In God we booſt all the day long, and praiſe thy name for ever.* He was too ſenſible of his own Infirmities to expect Deliverance out of Trouble by his own means, notwithſtanding the many peculiar Advantages for it, which his high ſtation afforded him, above thoſe of a meaner rank. And therefore when he found himſelf delivered, his way was preſently to break forth into Songs of Praiſe and Thankſgiving to *the God of his ſalvation*. He had put his Truſt in God before-hand as his beſt, his only Safeguard, and when he had obtained his End, he aſcribed the Praiſe of it not to himſelf, but to God who enabled him to obtain it.

* Pſ. 20. 7, 8.

† 44. 6, 7, 8.

And that this would be a very proper courſe, and highly becoming the greateſt and beſt of Men, to take ſtill upon all occaſions, cannot be queſtioned by any who conſider their miſerable Inſufficiency of themſelves, and the undoubted hazard

hazard whereto they expoſe their Affairs, whenſoever they venture to truſt to any Humane Power for Safety, whether it be to their own Authority and Command, or to the Forces of powerfull Confederates. As I ſhall endeavour more particularly to prove.

1. Wherefore, to begin with the former of theſe, Their own Authority and Command over others, who are bound to be at their beck, and venture the utmoſt in their ſervice, whenſoever they are called to it. This qualifies them for bold attempts, and too frequently renders them the Peſts of the World, and Diſturbers of Mankind, but is very far from ſecuring them againſt the very ſame miſchiefs they deſign for others. When once a confidence of their Strength makes them regardleſs of Almighty God, the Lord of Hoſts, and the uncontroulable Sovereign of themſelves and all their Forces, upon what variety of diſadvantages do they hereby caſt themſelves? How many of them miſcarry in their undertakings, and never arrive at the Benefit, the Glory or Gain, the Honour or Profit they aſpire after? And of thoſe that do, how many are there who when advanced to the height of worldly Greatneſs, yet find but little Satisfaction, and perhaps, leſs Security in it? The Satyriſt obſerved long agoe of the *Romans*, That * to aſcend the Throne amongſt them, was but to make way ordinarily for a more deadly fall, and poſſibly before they were well warm in it: And the Hiſtories of all Ages and Countries contain too many Inſtances of this kind, of perſons who have hazarded their Souls, Bodies, Eſtates, Honours, Friends, all that was dear

* Ad generum Cereris ſine cæde & ſanguine pauci Deſcendunt reges, & ſiccâ morte tyranni.
Juv. Sat. 10.

dear to him, to advance themſelves, and yet have not ſucceeded in their Attempts; and of others who have ſucceeded for a while, and yet have fallen far ſhort of the Happineſs they had vainly promiſed themſelves, and at length have died much more miſerably, and left their Poſterity in a worſe condition than if they had continued in their former obſcurer Poſt.

And in truth, how ſhould it be otherwiſe, when poor mortal Creatures take upon them to carve out their own Fortunes, as if there were none above them to controul their Pride? This may juſtly provoke God, to put forth his Hand, and humble them for their Inſolence, letting them ſee to their coſt, That * *the Lord is King be the people never ſo impatient*, that *he ſitteth between the Cherubims, be the earth never ſo unquiet, and is great in Sion, and high above all people.* And the Prophet *Habakkuk* denounces a woe againſt ſuch, that might well affright all who have any regard to it from ever daring thus to ſet their faces againſt Heaven. † *Wo to him that coveteth an evil covetouſneſs to his houſe, that he may ſet his neſt on high, that he may be delivered from the power of evil. Thou haſt conſulted ſhame to thy houſe, by cutting off many people, and haſt ſinned againſt thy ſoul.* Where the Prophet taxes the *Babylonians* with having uſed all means to raiſe themſelves, without ſticking at the injuſtice of any of them; that they had coveted what they had no right to; and to obtain it had committed a great deal of Rapine and Bloodſhed, and made miſerable Deſolation in many places, to the end that they might get above their Neighbours, and might uſe them as barbarouſly as they pleaſed, and not be afraid of them, but might ſecurely

* Pſ. 99. 1, 2.

† Hab. 2. 9, 10.

look down upon them, as a Bird from her high-built Neſt looks down without fear upon thoſe Vermin whom ſhe knows unable to reach her at that diſtance; but he tells them withall, that this care would not anſwer their Expectation, for it ſhould not tend to their Safety but their Ruine, for all their Cruelty and Injuſtice ſhould return upon themſelves, and as high as they had advanced themſelves, and as ſecure as they thought themſelves in their uſurped Power, they ſhould be brought down, and ſubjected to the Dominion of the *Medes*. Which came to paſs not very long after (but about 71 years, if * Archbiſhop *Uſher*'s Calculation be right) when *Darius* came upon King *Nabonidus*, otherwiſe called *Belſhazar*, at his impious Feaſt, and took away the Kingdom from him, together with his Life. † Which he did, ſaith † *Daniel, being about threeſcore and two years old.* Whence it may not be amiſs to obſerve, with the ‖ learned Dr. *Lightfoot*, That *he was born in the year of* Jehoiakim's *death, and* Jehoiakin's *Captivity*; and conſequently, that it pleaſed God to provide, *that in that very year, when the* Babylonian *was moſt buſie to captive and deſtroy, the Captiver and Deſtroyer of* Babylon *ſhould be born.*

* Vet. Teſt. Annal. An. Mundi 3466.

† Dan. 5. 30, 31.

‖ Chron. of the O. Teſt p. 134.

And no leſs remarkably (though after another manner) did it pleaſe God to diſcomfit the proud *Sennacherib*, when big with his former Victories over divers Countries, he had ſent *Rabſhakeh* to diſſuade the *Jews* from truſting in God, * as ſuppoſing him no more able to ſave them out of his Hand, than the Gods of other Nations had been to deliver their People. † *Concerning the King of Aſſyria*, ſaith God, *he ſhall not come into this City, nor ſhoot an arrow there, nor come before it with*

* 2 King. 19. 12, 13.

† v. 32, 33, 34.

with ſhield, nor caſt a bank againſt it; by the way that he came, by the ſame ſhall he return, and ſhall not come into this City, ſaith the Lord. But I will defend this City to ſave it, for mine own ſake, and for my ſervant David's ſake. And then follows the miraculous completion of this Prediction in the next words, * *It came to paſs that night that the Angel of the Lord went out, and ſmote in the camp of the Aſſyrians an hundred and fourſcore and five thouſand, and when they aroſe early in the morning, behold they were all dead corps.*

* v. 35.

The greateſt Monarch is no more in his Hand than the meaneſt Peaſant, but both alike fall at his Command. For † it is the ſame thing to him to conquer by many, or by few, or by no apparent means at all, by *an arm of fleſh*, (which is his moſt uſual way) or ‖ by an inviſible Hoſt, by * infatuating their Counſels, as *Abſolom*, or † ſmiting them with Blindneſs, as the *Syrians*; or ‖ by an unexpected noiſe in the Camp, as he put the ſame People to flight; * by an Army of Mice devouring their Harneſs and Bowſtrings, as isrelated of the *Aſſyrians*; by † overwhelming them in the Sea, as the *Egyptians*; by the ‖ ſounding only of Rams-horns, as he threw down the Walls of *Jericho*; by an * appearance of Blood, as he diſordered, and thereby defeated the *Moabites*; by † a ſtorm of Hail, as he overthrew the five Kings that fought againſt *Gibeon*; or by ‖ ſetting them one againſt another, as the *Midianites*, and * as the Children of *Ammon*, and *Moab*, and the Inhabitants of *Mount Seir*. And this a † great Man gives

† Jud. 7. 7. 1 Sam. 14. 13, &c. Ideo illi infirmiſſimis hoſtibus cuncta tradidit, ut oſtenderet ſcilicet non ſvires valere, ſed cauſam. *Salv. de gub. Dei. l.* 7.

‖ 2 King. 6. 17.

* 2 Sam. 17. 14.

† 2 King. 6. 18.

‖ c. 7. 6, 7.

* Euterp. c. 141. & Joſeph. Antiquit. l. 10. c. 1.

† Exod. 14. 28.

‖ Joſh. 6. 20.

* 2 King. 3. 21, &c.

† Joſh. 10. 11.

‖ Jud. 7. 22.

* 2 Chron. 20. 23.

† Dr. Jackſon on the *Creed*, as l. 6. p. 2. c. 28.

as the reaſon why God is ſo oft in Scripture ſtiled, *The Lord of hoſts*, as by a moſt ſpecial and peculiar Attribute; *That his peculiar hand is not in any ſubject of humane Contemplation more conſpicuous than in the managing of Wars.* In ſhort, * Pſ. 33. 16. * *there is no King ſaved by the multitude of an hoſt, neither is any mighty man delivered by much ſtrength*; all the Succeſs of the moſt formidable Forces depending intirely upon the Pleaſure of Almighty God, who orders them all as may beſt ſerve the Ends of his infinite Wiſdom. It is not their own Foreſight, or Conduct, or the ſtrength of their Armies, but it is God himſelf † Pſ. 144. 10. that † *giveth ſalvation unto Kings, and delivereth his ſervants from the hurtfull ſword.* And they are always the ſafeſt, when they truſt more to his Protection, than to their own Armies, how numerous ſoever.

2. And the Caſe is much the ſame in relation to powerfull Confederates. For theſe being in like manner at God's diſpoſal, and having their Subſiſtence, and all their Power and Might from || Job 9. 13. him, can do nothing without his Permiſſion. || *If he* at any time *will not withdraw his anger*, if he deſign to execute his Judgments upon a ſinfull People, by giving them up into the hands of their Enemies, and will not be prevailed with to alter his Decree, *the proudeſt* of their *Helpers* muſt neceſſarily *ſtoop under him.* And accordingly he hath threatened in Scripture, that becauſe of the *Jews* ſeeking out to *Egypt*, inſtead of addreſſing themſelves to him for Succour in their Diſtreſſes, they ſhould certainly have cauſe to repent and be aſhamed of this their Folly, when their own Experience ſhould have taught them, that this was not the way to be delivered out of trouble

be

but to be involved farther in it. * *Wo to them that go down to Egypt for help, and ſtay on horſes, and truſt in chariots, becauſe they are many; and in horſe-men, becauſe they are very ſtrong; but they look not unto the holy one of Iſrael, neither ſeek the Lord. Yet he alſo is wiſe, and will bring evil, and will not call back his words; but will ariſe againſt the houſe of the evil-doers, and againſt the help of them that work iniquity. Now the Egyptians are men and not God, and their horſes fleſh and not ſpirit; when the Lord ſhall ſtretch out his hand, both he that helpeth ſhall fall, and he that is holpen ſhall fall down, and they all ſhall fall together.* And to the ſame purpoſe God ſends the Prophet *Hanani* to acquaint King *Aſa*, that his Confederacy with *Benhadad* ſhould not profit him; it might cauſe *Baaſha* to deſiſt from building of *Ramah*, but ſhould not ſettle the Kingdom of *Judah* in Peace. † *Becauſe thou haſt relied on the King of Syria, and not relied on the Lord thy God, therefore is the hoſt of the King of Syria eſcaped out of thine hand*, ſo eſcaped and gone, as that thou art to expect no relief from it in thy diſtreſs. *Were not the Ethiopians and the Lubims a huge hoſt, with very many chariots and horſemen? yet becauſe thou didſt rely on the Lord, he delivered them into thine hand*; becauſe thou then acteſt more wiſely, and as became thee, putting thy Truſt in him who alone could ſave thee, therefore he took pity on thee, and made thee Conquerour over theſe ſo formidable Enemies. *For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to ſhew himſelf ſtrong in behalf of them, whoſe heart is perfect towards him. Herein thou haſt done fooliſhly, therefore* theſe thy Confederacies ſhall not ſecure thee, they ſhall not

* Iſ. 31. 1, 2, 3.

† 2 Chron. 16. 7, 8, 9.

be a means of thy Quiet, but of thy farther Trouble and Sorrow, for this will certainly be thy portion, *from henceforth thou ſhalt have wars.*

Thus the Scripture teſtifies ſingle and confederate Forces to be equal in relation to God's overruling Providence; but conſidered in themſelves, with reſpect to their own natural Capacities they are not ſo. For the latter have divers peculiar Inconveniencies attending them, which make them a far leſs probable Inſtrument of Safety than the other, unleſs counterpoiſed by Numbers, or ſome other remarkable Advantages. Perhaps they may not all be hearty in what they undertake. Or if they be, yet there may be points of Honour to be adjuſted amongſt their Officers, which may occaſion Differences amongſt them, or ſeparate Intereſts may be carrying on, each one endeavouring to favour his own Men, and lay the Burden rather upon his Allies. And at beſt, their Proceedings will be backwarder, their Counſels ſlower, and their Deſigns more liable to be diſcovered and prevented. Upon all which accounts there is leſs reaſon to promiſe our ſelves Security from any Aſſiſtances of this kind. God may bleſs the Means, and make them effectual to the Ends for which they are deſigned; but if he do, it is to his Bleſſing upon them, not to the Means themſelves without his Concurrence, that we are to aſcribe our Welfare.

The plain and moſt natural Inference from which Conſiderations is that of the Royal *Pſal-*
[p] Pal. 118. 8, 9. *miſt*, * *It is better to truſt in the Lord, than to put any confidence in man; it is better to truſt in the Lord, than to put any confidence in Princes*, all humane helps whatſoever being perfectly uſeleſs without him. He can and will ſave his faithful

Servants

Servants, who heartily depend upon him, though by very unlikely Means, causing the Destruction their Enemies had prepared for them to fall upon their own Heads. He can overpower all their Might, detect their most secret Designs, counterwork their subtilest Stratagems, and when they seem most secure of Success, can presently convince them to their sorrow, that their Hopes are vain. It is but for him to say it and all Nations must fall before him; the most potent *Kings with their Armies must fly and be discomfited, and leave them of the houshold to divide the spoil.* And so saith God by the Prophet *Isaiah*, * *When thou criest, let thy Companies deliver thee,* * Is. 57. 13. *but the wind shall carry them all away, vanity shall take them: but he that putteth his trust in me shall possess the land, and shall inherit my holy mountain.*

III. A third Means of Safety is, a Man's own Personal Abilities and Industry. By which I mean these four things;

1. Strength of Body.
2. Courage, and Stoutness of Mind.
3. Wisdom in the management of Affairs.
4. Diligence in the use of any or all of these.

Now as to the first of these,

1. Strength of Body, it is very obvious to observe, *how vain a thing Man is at his best estate,* how easily carried off by any cross Accident. [1] A Grape-stone, [2] a Fish-bone, [3] a Hair either swallowed, [1] Valer Maxim. l. 9. c. 12. [2] Drexel. Prodr. æternit. c. 1. Sect. 20. [3] Ibid.

4 or pull'd off from the Skin, 5 a Fly, 6 an ill Smell, unwholsome Food, too much Pains, or Watching, or Drink, or Meat; 7 a fit of Laughter, 8 a sudden Fright, 9 an excess of Heat or Cold, 10 of Joy, or 11 Grief, 12 there is nothing so mean and contemptible but can quickly put an end to his Days, if once God give it commission. 13 *What man is he*, saith the *Psalmist*, what 14 strong Man, it is in the Original, *that liveth, and shall not see death? shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave?* When a fit of Sickness comes, the Strongest are frequently snatch'd away sooner than those of a feebler Constitution. And since there are multitudes also of other Dangers whereto they are obnoxious, that may presently put a stop to their noblest Designs, and perhaps may ruine themselves together with them, what vanity it is to boast themselves in these Circumstances? There is none that can pretend to compare with *Sampson* or *Goliah* for Strength; yet no sooner is the Lord departed from one of them, 15 but the *Philistims* abuse him to a great degree; and see 16 how speedily, and how contemptibly the other falls, when Almighty God condescends to direct the Stone, though but from a Stripling's Sling. He came forth with a mighty Expectation of Success by reason of his unparallell'd Stature and

4 Dela Valle's Travels, p. 464.

5 Καὶ γὰρ κάνθαρος, καὶ φαλάγγιον τοῦτ' ἂν πράξοιεν. Diog. Laert. l. 6. in vitâ Diog. Theodorus Lysimacho mortem minitanti, Magnum vero, inquit, effecisti, si Cantharidis vim consecutus es. *Cic. Tusc. Quæst. l. 5.*

6 Odor illi, saporque, & lassitudo, & vigilia, & humor, & cibus, & sine quibus vivere non potest mortifera sunt. *Senec. de Consol. ad Marciam, c. 11.* Non cibus nobis, non humor, non vigilia, non somnus, sine mensura quædam salubria sunt. *Sen. Nat. Quæst. l. 6. c. 2.*

7 Ἔνιοι δὲ φάσι γελώτι συσχεθέντα αὐτὸν τελεύτησαι. Diog Laert. l. 7. in vitâ Chrysip. Si per risum ut P. Crassus. *Tertul. de animâ, c. 29.* Philemonem autem vis risus immoderati abstulit. *Valer. Max. l. 9. c. 12.*

8 Quem pavor repentinus, aut item ex improviso sonus auribus gravis excutit. *Senec. ad Marc. c. 11.* Scilicet ex emendatione Just. Lypsii.

9 Frigoris, æstus, laboris impatiens. *Senec. Ibid.*

10 Si præ gaudio quis spiritum exhalet, ut Chilon Spartanus dum victorem Olympiæ filium amplectitur. *Tertull. de an.*

and Strength, *defying the Armies of the living God*, and glorying in the appearance of an eaſie Victory,[17] *Come*, ſaith he to *David, and I will give thy fleſh unto the fowls of the air, and unto the beaſts of the field.* And yet[18] this very *David* whom he ſo deſpiſed, as by no means a fit match for one of his figure, was made the inſtrument of his death, and the Defeater of all thoſe hopes that were built upon him. And this not by any skill in War that he had above him, whereby to ſupply his want of Strength; for he was[19] *but a youth*, and whoſe buſineſs it had been to keep his Father's Cattel; but the other was a *man of war from his youth*; not by a Bow, or Sword, or other the uſual Inſtruments of War, for he only[20] *put his hand into his bag, and took thence a ſtone and ſlang it, and ſmote the Philiſtin in his forehead, that the ſtone ſunk into his forehead, and he fell upon his face to the earth.*

c. 29. Multorum animas præceps & inſpectata lætitia excuſſit, quod Chiloni Lacedæmonio, & Rhodio Diagoræ contigiſſe accepimus, &c. *Drex. prodr. et. c.* 1. *Sect.* 20. Annon illa Romana pietatis notiſſimæ mater, nuncio mali Cannenſis exterrita, filio reduce, quæ flebat, diriguit in mortem? nec par eſſe gaudio poterat, quæ ſuperfuerat orbitati. *L. Pacati Dr. Panegyr. Theodoſio dict. p.* 514. Sophocles ultimæ jam ſenectutis— cauſam mortis gaudium habuit. *Valer. Max. l.* 9. *c.* 12.

[11] 1 Sam. 4. 18. Non vulgaris etiam Homeri mortis cauſa fertur, qui in inſula, quia quæſtionem à piſcatoribus propoſitam ſolvere non potuiſſet, dolore abſumptus creditur. *Val. Max. Ibid.*

[12] Cum mors ubique præſto ſit, & undiq; occurrat; nihilque ſit tam exiguum, quod non in perniciem generis humani, ſatis valeat. *Senec. Nat. Quæſt. l.* 6. *c.* 2.

[13] Pſ. 89. 48. [14] מִי גֶבֶר יִחְיֶה וְלֹא יִרְאֶה --- סֶלָה [15] Jud. 16. 20. [16] 1 Sam. 17. 40, &c. [17] *v.* 44. [18] *v.* 50, 51, 52. [19] *v.* 35, & 33. [20] *v.* 49.

Lo here an abundant proof of Humane Frailty, and which may well humble the moſt conceited of their own Strength, and teach them to diſtruſt themſelves, and look up to Almighty God for Safety, who whenever he pleaſes can cut them off in the midſt of their Glory; as alſo at other times he can change the Scene, and let them

them live to ſee themſelves deſpiſed; can ſend a *Clement* or *Ravillac* to diſpatch them, or deliver them into the Hand of a Woman, as * *Siſera*, or as † *Cyrus*; or order them to be devoured by Vermin, as ‖ *Herod*; or if it pleaſe him better, can give them to be carried in triumph, as * *Bajazet*; or uſed for a Footſtool, as † *Valerian*; can deprive them of their Underſtanding, as ‖ *Diocleſian*; or ſend them forth to beg their Bread, as * *Beliſarius*. He has ways enough to avenge himſelf upon the haughtieſt amongſt the Sons of Men. And they muſt therefore expect that when they grow forgetfull of him, he will take a time, whether ſooner or later, to convince them of their own weakneſs, and to ſhew them by an undeniable Experiment, that all their Undertakings come to nothing without his aſſiſtance, and that † *by ſtrength no man ſhall prevail.*

* Judg. 4. 21.
† Herodot. Cli. c. 214.
‖ Act. 12. 23.
* Knoll's in the Life of *Bajazet* the Fourth King of the *Turks*.
† Lactant. de mortibus perſecut. c. 5.
‖ Ibid. c. 17.
* Volat. Com. Urb. l. 23.
† 1 Sam. 2. 9.

2. Courage and Stoutneſs of Mind. This is a good Preſervative from needleſs Fears, and a Preparative for Difficulties, and bold and hazardous Enterprizes, and hence many times turns to good account; but withall, it hath need of great Prudence to regulate it, and a proportionable Strength to ſupport it, or otherwiſe the effects of it may prove very ſad. If it grow exceſſive, and ſo degenerate into Raſhneſs, or if it meet with greater oppoſition than was expected and provided againſt, it is a ready way to Ruine, by involving men in dangers, out of which they are in no wiſe able to extricate themſelves. And at beſt it is but a feeble ſupport againſt any Adverſity, unleſs

unleſs men had ſtrength of Body, and all other requiſite Qualifications, for carrying them through all the difficulties wherein it may engage them. It ſtirs them up to noble Atchievements, and when attended with good Succeſs in them is a means of their advancement at preſent, and perhaps of tranſmitting the laſting Fame of their daring Exploits to many Generations. But it is not always thus proſperous. And when it is, the Honour of it is due to Almighty God, for granting his Bleſſing to it, which had he withheld, it muſt neceſſarily have had a quite contrary event.

A miſtaken notion of Courage is a common (alas! God knows, too common) occaſion of needleſs and moſt miſchievous Quarrels and Duels, and ends in the deſtruction of ſuch as are apt to value themſelves moſt upon it. And when better underſtood, and uſed with more conſideration, and to better purpoſes, it is no ſecurity againſt the multitudes of Evils whereto we are continually obnoxious, and muſt be whilſt we remain in this ſtate of Sin and Sorrows. It may preſerve from ſome diſadvantages, but it is well if it do not at other times expoſe to more and greater. And though it may be helpfull for obtaining ſome good, it may poſſibly more than counterbalance this by the miſchiefs it brings along with it.

3. Wiſdom. Of what conſtant uſe this is in the mangement of all Affairs, how Policy oftentimes ſupplies the defect of Strength or Numbers, or whatſoever other Advantages, and how the want of it on the other hand is a likely cauſe of ruining the probableſt Undertakings, is too well known to need that I ſhould inſiſt upon it.

Prudence,

Prudence, and Foreſight, and a good contrivance before-hand, and a due attendance upon the Inconveniencies that there is moſt danger of meeting with in the proſecution of a Deſign, are of ſuch neceſſity in order to its ſucceſs, that nothing of difficulty can ordinarily be expected to be brought to a good concluſion without them. But where theſe concurr in any conſiderable degree, they give a Man a ſtrange advantage for great and noble Undertakings. Yet are they, like *Job*'s Friends, but * *miſerable Comforters*, whenſoever they are ſeparated from a Dependance upon Almighty God, for his Bleſſing upon them. Nor can they at any time be ſecurely relied upon, as an infallible proviſion againſt whatſoever danger, or a ſure means of obtaining any good. They may give reaſonable grounds of hoping well, but leave us after all at great uncertainties, inaſmuch as the moſt quick-ſighted Obſerver can never diſcover all the ſecret Springs of Nature, and their ſeveral tendencies in relation to ſuch and ſuch an Action, much leſs can dive into the unfathomable Deſigns of the Divine Providence in reſpect to it; which yet are neceſſary to be known before a right Judgment can be made of it.

* Job 16. 2.

It pleaſes God many times to cut off cunning and mighty Men in the height of their Expectations, when they think they have well nigh ſurmounted all the Impediments they had to conflict with, and are upon the very point of enjoying the fruit of their Endeavours. He lets them go on with an appearance of ſucceſs for a good while together, when yet there is an unknown Train laid to blow them up, even when they leaſt dream of it. He cauſeth † *the wiſdom of the wiſe men to periſh, and the underſtanding of the crafty to be*

† Iſ. 29. 14.

be hid; hereby teaching them how weak and defective all their own Contrivances are, and how unfit of themſelves for accompliſhing their Deſigns; and conſequently, in how wretched a condition they muſt be, and what frequent and fatal diſappointments they muſt look to meet with, if they had no better Security to rely upon.

Of which, ſee an eminent and ſingularly remarkable Inſtance of the defeat of *Cæſar Borgia*, Son to Pope *Alexander* the Sixth, a Man of great Ambition, and who would try all ways to advance himſelf: This Man fearing leaſt after his Father's death he ſhould come to be ſtrip'd of all that he might in the mean time have receiv'd from him, or might otherwiſe have made himſelf maſter of, ſet himſelf (as *Machiavil* relates concerning him) * to conſult the beſt Expedient for prevention of this Misfortune, and indeed had laid a Train for it, which he concluded to be paſt danger of miſcarrying. But all this while, ſaith the forenamed Author, he had not conſidered, that at the time of his Father's death, † himſelf might happen to be at death's door likewiſe, and ſo not in a capacity to purſue his propoſed method. Here to his great regret his Policy ſhew'd it ſelf deficient, in that when he had been eagerly buſying himſelf for ſo long a time together, to find out the beſt means for his Eſtabliſhment, he had not yet been apprehenſive that he ſhould not be in a condition to make uſe of them. Thus it ſeems good to God to ‖ *diſappoint the devices of the crafty, ſo that their hands cannot perform their enterprize.*

* Mach. Princ. c. 7.

† Jamq; eo tempore, quo Julius Secundus Pontifex maximus fuerat creatus, mihi dixerat ſe ad omnem rerum eventum, quem à patris morte futurum putaret, longè in poſterum proſpexiſſe, atque remedia comparaſſe: illud unum duntaxat ſe præteriiſſe, quod ſcilicet nunquam putarat ſub ejus morte, ſibi etiam cum morte eſſe confligendum. *Ibid.*

‖ Job 5. 12, 13.

enterprize. He taketh the wiſe in their own craftineſs, entraps them in their own Stratagems, and how cunning ſoever their Projects may have been, either for their own advancement, or for the ruine of others, he ſees and over-rules them all, and will be ſure to bring things to paſs, as ſhall beſt ſuit with his infinite Wiſdom.

4. Diligence in the uſe of any or all of theſe.

* Prov. 13. 4. † c. 18. 9. ‖ c. 19. 15. * c. 10. 4. † c. 13. 11.

* *The ſoul of the ſluggard*, ſaith *Solomon*, *deſireth and hath nothing*; and † *he that is ſlothfull in his work is brother to him that is a great waſter*; and again, ‖ *the idle ſoul ſhall ſuffer hunger*. And both Scripture and Experience inform us no leſs on the other hand, that * *the hand of the diligent maketh rich*, and † *he that gathereth by labour ſhall encreaſe*; that is, that an induſtrious application to Buſineſs is the likelieſt courſe a Man can take to thrive in the World; though it is not ſo certain, but that he may ſometimes meet with a diſappointment though he labour never ſo heartily to prevent it; and eſpecially if he have the vanity to depend ſolely upon his own Endeavours.

‖ Jer. 12. 13.

Diligence is the propereſt natural Means in order to our preſent welfare; but yet there may be caſes wherein God may think fit to deny his Bleſſing to it, and ‖ ſo *they that have ſown wheat, may reap thorns: and after they have put themſelves to pains, may not profit*, but *may be aſhamed of their revenues*; and the ſmall return they enjoy from all the labour they have taken. This account the Prophet *Haggai* gives of the ſtate of the *Jews* in his time, when they took care for themſelves, but regarded not the Houſe of God, but ſuffered it to *lie waſt*, and thereby provoked God to obſtruct their other Attempts.

* Ye

* *Ye have ſown much*, ſaith the Prophet, *and bring in little: ye eat, but ye have not enough: ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink: ye cloath you, but there is none warm: and he that earneth wages, earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes.* And the caſe may be the ſame with any elſe, that are not mindful to ſecure an intereſt in God's Bleſſing, as well as to try all other courſes for bringing their Deſigns about. For he can nip the fruit of their Endeavours in the Bud; or if he ſuffer it to grow can parch it up with a blaſt, or wither it with an exceſſive drought, or can ſend an Army of Locuſts, or Caterpillers, or Snails to devour it. * Hag. 1. 6.

† *The way of man is not in himſelf; it is not in man that walketh to direct his ſteps.* He may contrive, and may uſe his utmoſt Induſtry, but it is not in his power to order his Affairs, ſo as that he can certainly expect them to ſucceed to his mind. He may take a great deal of pains in carrying on his Deſigns, and promiſe himſelf a great deal of advantage and ſatisfaction from them; and yet he knows not whether all his Care ſhall not prove in vain, or indeed whether it may not poſſibly be an occaſion of ſome unexpected ill to him. It is no new thing to have *laboured for the wind*, to have put one's ſelf to much trouble, and ſpent much time to no purpoſe, than if he had ſet himſelf, with the *Danaides*, to pour Water into a Sieve; or with *Siſyphus*, to rowl a Stone up the ſteep ſide of a Hill, and let it go again when juſt at the top. † Jer. 10. 23.

If Men's own Endeavours could entitule them to Succeſs without God's Bleſſing, I know none could have had a fairer pretence to it than the Builders of *Babel*, when ‖ *the whole earth was of one* ‖ Gen. 11. 1.

one language, and of one ſpeech, and when they had unanimouſly ſet themſelves to carry on this magnificent Pile; and yet how ſtrangely were they diſappointed upon that confuſion of Tongues which was ſent amongſt them. They could then no longer purſue their Undertaking, but were * *ſcattered abroad upon the face of the earth*, and forced to *leave off building their city* And no wonder if it fare accordingly with others, who have the hardineſs to rely upon their own Attempts for accompliſhing their Ends, without referring themſelves to that over-ruling Providence, which thus ſignally defeats the vain Hopes of the moſt Confident in their own Performances.

* v. 8.

IV. A fourth means of Safety is the Aſſiſtance of Friends. Which is ſaid by ſome of the Philoſophers to be † *the Refuge of Misfortune, the Comfort of Want, the Cure of Miſery*, and in a word, to be ‖ that to Life, which a ſafe and ſeaſonable Haven is to a weather-beaten Ship. And it is certainly a mighty abatement of the greateſt Streights or ſhardeſt Afflictions to meet with Friends that are ready to pity and relieve us, as they ſhall have ability and opportunity. And yet what S. *Auguſtine* affirms of them is too true, that they are but unſafe Shelters and feeble Supports, that *have no power* to cover or uphold us in time of Adverſity, *and* * *too often prove an occaſion of farther ſorrow rather than an help*. As will eaſily be made to appear from a brief inſpection into the nature of that Aſſiſtance

† Φίλος ἐστὶ — καταφυγὴ δυστυχίας, ἀπορίας παραμύθιον, ἄκος ταλαιπωρίας. Secundi Philoſ. Sentent.

‖ Λιμὴν μὲν πλοίῳ ὅρμος, βίῳ δὲ φιλία. Demophili ſimilit.

* Sunt quædam refugia ubi non eſt virtus, quo quiſq; cum fugerit, magis infirmatur, quàm confirmatur. *D. Aug. in* Pſ. 45.

ſiſtance we expect from them in our Neceſſities. Which ſo far as it falls under our Conſideration at preſent, I take to conſiſt only of theſe three parts;

1. Advice in our Streights.
2. Defence againſt Troubles.
3. Support in our Needs.

1. Advice in our Streights. Now it is certainly a friendly Office, and a conſiderable piece of Charity, to be ready at all times to counſel thoſe that are in Difficulties and Wants, and therefore ſeek for direction to deliver themſelves out of them. But it is plain, all Men are not capacitated to undertake this Office, becauſe, to perform it aright it is requiſite that the Adviſer be a Man of Prudence and Underſtanding, and that moreover, if it may be, he apprehend the Circumſtances of thoſe that want his Advice, at leaſt as to the Caſe they adviſe about. And when ſuch an one is found, it is poſſible he may be modeſt and unwilling to venture too far upon his own Judgment, and hence may be backward to ſpeak his Sentiments in matters of moſt Intricacy, and which therefore need his help moſt; or he may be wary and cautious, and loth to meddle with things that do not immediately concern himſelf; or he may have ſome Intereſt of his own depending, or ſome Deſign in hand, or a Relation to ſome Friend whom this Caſe may affect, which may make him partial in it, and not to give the beſt Advice he can. Or if none of theſe happen, but he be ready to ſpeak his Mind freely and openly, yet being but a Man, and therefore ſubject to manifold infirmities, he may

perhaps be miſtaken, in part at leaſt of his Advice, and by this means may prove a cauſe of much miſchief to the perſon, to whom he meant a kindneſs. Or if not this neither, but he gives the beſt, the fitteſt, the propereſt Advice that can be, ſtill this is but Advice, and can operate no farther than I am both capable and carefull to put it in practice. And yet if I knew how to follow it as I ought, it depends however upon God's Will, whether I ſhall reap the benefit from it, that I may in all appearance have reaſon to expect. It is ſcarce to be thought that I ſhould ask Counſel of a ſubtiler Politician than *Achitophel*, yet *the Lord* in his wiſe Providence

* 2 Sam. 17. 14. * *appointed to defeat the good counſel of Achitophel, to the intent that the Lord might bring evil upon Abſalom*, who had taken him for his director.

Every Man is not prepared to follow good Advice, when freely and faithfully given him, any

† 2 King. 12. 13. more than † *Reboboam* was to hearken to the Counſel of the Old Men, for his rejecting whereof the ten Tribes of *Iſrael* revolted from him. And of thoſe that are, God may have (if not the ſame, yet ſome other) juſt reaſon to ſay, as he did of *Syria*, *Ephraim*, and the Son of *Remaliah*,

‖ Iſ. 7. 7. ‖ *Thus ſaith the Lord, it ſhall not ſtand, neither ſhall it come to paſs.* And if he once contradict it, there is nothing can withſtand his Power, or hold out againſt his Word. That which he reſolves, none can ever defeat, that it ſhall not certainly obtain its effect. One Generation paſſes away and another comes in its ſtead, but his Purpoſes are ſtill immoveably the ſame, and ſhall undoubtedly prevail throughout all Ages. Thus much the *Pſalmiſt* aſſures us in theſe words, *The counſel of the Lord ſtandeth for ever,*

an

and the thoughts of his heart to all Generations.

But Mans Imaginations, on the contrary, are but vain. His Directions may prove advantageous in some cases, and when duly followed, but since there is no certainty that they will, it must be a very great weakness to rely upon them, as if there were.

A Physician may give the best Advice he can for his Patients recovery, but in some critical cases he may mistake the nature of his Distemper, and order him an unsuitable and hurtful Medicine. And when his Prescriptions are in all respects the most apposite that may be, this signifies nothing, unless they be regularly attended to. And if they be most strictly observed, it still belongs to God to give a Blessing to them, which yet except he do, the Patient may be long enough before he receive any benefit from them.

2. Defence against Troubles. When Calamities apparently hover over us, some kind Friend may possibly step in, and ward off the blow, either intirely or in part, or if a Wound be already given, may with the good * *Samaritan*, bind it up, suppling it with *wine and oyl*, or doing what else seems necessary to a Cure. But alas! where are they ordinarily to be found, that will be thus ready to concern themselves for us? Two in our Saviour's Parable pass'd by † *the man that had fallen amongst thieves*, for one that would vouchsafe to commiserate his distressed condition, and take care of him. And in the ordinary course of the World the disparity is far greater, scarce one in a multitude of Spectators thinking it needfull to trouble himself about other persons Sufferings, any farther than formal-

* S. Lu. 10. 34.

† v. 31, 32, 33.

ly to profeſs a ſorrow for them. And how little is the Ability of them that are more heartily compaſſionate? Whilſt they are Men, ſubject to the Infirmities of Humane Nature, and liable to the manifold Misfortunes that uſually attend this frail uncertain Life, they cannot ſave themſelves from Troubles, and are therefore at leaſt as unable to keep them off from others, how earneſtly ſoever they deſire, and endeavour it, and watch all opportunities for it.

3. Support in our Needs. To feed the Hungry, give Drink to the Thirſty, cloath the Naked, lodge the Stranger, and viſit the Sick and the Priſoner, is a neceſſary branch of Chriſtianity; ſo neceſſary, that our Bleſſed Lord to impreſs theſe Duties the more effectually upon the Minds of his Followers, and make them the more carefully obſervant of them, chooſes in his account of the laſt Judgment, to inſtance in the exerciſe or neglect of them, as the Criterion or Teſt whereby the Sheep and the Goats ſhall be diſcriminated, when they come to appear before his Tribunal. And none therefore who has any regard to the Obligations that lie upon him from his Religion, but will find himſelf nearly concerned to be frequently employing himſelf in Duties of this nature, as he ſhall have Ability, and ſhall meet with proper Objects for his Relief. Or whereinſoever elſe he can be helpful to thoſe that need it, he will ſee a parity of Reaſon directing, not to omit a fair opportunity of exerciſing his Kindneſs to God's Glory, and his afflicted Neighbour's Benefit.

Nevertheleſs it muſt be owned, that if a Man's own Poſſeſſions are but an imperfect feeble remedy againſt this Life's Inconveniencies, a precarious

Precarious dependent Subsistence by the Charity and Favour of others cannot be better. I wish I could say, it were not abundantly worse; besides that it is less easie to a Man's Mind, that it were not also far more uncertain, and less like to answer his Necessities. For that it is so will easily appear from these following Particulars.

1. Possibly these Obligations of Christianity may make little or no impression upon those, who thou hoped'st would have been thy truest Friends, and best support in thy Exigencies; and they may pass by thee without regard, as the Priest and Levite by the wounded Man, in the * forementioned Parable, or like him in the Apostle S. *James*, may only † *say, be warmed and filled, without giving thee any of those things which are needfull for the body.* Whatever expectation thou hadst from them, and whatever occasion for it themselves may have given thee, ‖ there is no certainty that they will not leave thee to take care of thy self, when they see thee come really to want their Kindness. *Wealth*, as the Wise-man * speaks, *maketh many friends, but the poor is separated from his neighbour.* † *All the brethren of the poor do hate him, how much more do his friends go far from him?*

* S. Luk 10. 31, &c.
† S. Ja. 2. 16.

‖ Παύρους εὑρήσεις Πολυπαίδη ἄνδρας ἑταίρους,
Πιστὺς ἐν χαλεποῖς πρήγμασι γιγνομένους.
Theogn.

Quum fortuna manet, vultum servatis amici,
Quum cecidit, turpi vertitis ora fuga.
Petron. Arb. c. 40.

Donec eris fœlix multos numerabis amicos,
Nullus ad amissas ibit amicus opes. *Ovid. Trist. l.* 1. *El.* 8.

Crescat, sive adveniat egestas, decrescent, abibunt, seu verius detegentur amicitiæ. *Petrarch. de rem. utr. fort. l.* 1. *di.* 50.

* Prov. 19. 4. † v. 7.

2. If thy Friends be willing to assist thee, and most heartily desire it, it is possible that they may be no more in a capacity of doing it, than

* Gen. 21. 15, 16. * *Hagar* could ſupply her Son *Iſmael* with Drink, when at the point of Death for lack of it. Motherly Affection made her very uneaſie, and her Soul was truly grieved within her, at the ſight of her Child's forlorn Condition, and what would ſhe not have done for his Relief? But Water ſhe had none, and ſhe could not create it; and ſo was forc'd, ſore againſt her Will, to leave him and withdraw her ſelf, that ſhe might not be a ſpectator of his Death. As a Power to help doth not always imply a Willingneſs, ſo neither doth the earneſt deſire of doing it imply a Power anſwerable to ſuch Deſire.

3. Suppoſe there be both Will and Power at preſent, God Almighty can eaſily find out ways to prevent this for the future.

1. He can ſuffer ſome Accident to happen that may make a breach, and cauſe an irreconcileable Animoſity betwixt thy Friend and thee, like that betwixt † *Sarah* and the forenamed *Hagar*, upon the indecent behaviour of her Son; or as it is ſaid of ‖ *Amnon*, in relation to his Siſter *Thamar*, whom he had treacherouſly deflowred, that he afterwards *hated her exceedingly, ſo that the hatred wherewith he hated her, was greater than the love wherewith he had loved her* before. Conſidering the fickleneſs of Humane Nature, and how eaſily moſt Men are led aſide by their Paſſions, or Humours, or Intereſt, how quickly many take up a Prejudice againſt others, and how hardly they are prevail'd with to lay it aſide, though never ſo groundleſs and unreaſonable, it is eaſie to conceive that God may make uſe of theſe Differences to humble thoſe that had been prone to place their Truſt in their more wealthy Benefactors, rather than humbly ſeek to him for whatever they have need of.

† v. 9, 10.

‖ 2 Sam. 13. 15.

2. If

2. If no ſuch variance happen, and thy Friend is yet as ſolicitous for thy welfare as ever, and as deſirous to promote it, the caſe perhaps may be greatly altered with him in a little time *; ſo that he who now ſo generouſly ſupports thee, may come to ſtand in need of the like Relief from others; or at leaſt, may be utterly incapacitated for his wonted Bounty. I have already obſerv'd the great inſtability of all Earthly Enjoyments, which when they promiſe faireſt, may ſpeedily take their flight, and leave the Owner no longer in a condition to provide for himſelf, much leſs for others. How many may our ſelves have known that have lived in great Pomp, and been accounted to have large Eſtates, that yet have of † a ſudden been blown up and gone? How many have had their whole Revenues violently ſeiz'd by a mercileſs Enemy? How many have gone ‖ Rich to Bed at Night, and before Morning have had their Houſes, Goods, and it may be their whole Eſtate conſum'd to Aſhes? He that is moſt munificent to Day, has no aſſurance that he ſhall not be deſtitute of all things by to Morrow; or that his Plenty ſhall not be turned into extremity of want. None can ſeem ſafer in this reſpect than *Job* might, of whom we have this account given, That he was the Father of ſeven Sons and three Daughters, and Maſter of ſeven thouſand Sheep, three thouſand Camels, five hundred Yoke of Oxen, and as many She-Aſſes, and a great number of Servants to

* Tanta tamen hujus ſæculi incerta ſunt, & ita potentum ruinæ quotidianæ crebreſcunt, ut quum ad tale refugium confugeris, plus ibi timere incipias. *D. Auguſt. in Pſ.* 45.

† Unuſque Titan vidit, atque unus dies
Stantem & cadentem.
Herc. Oet. v. 423.

‖ Quos fœlices Cynthia vidit,
Vidit miſeros abitura dies.
Rarum eſt felix, idemque ſenex.
Ibid. v. 641, &c.

* Job 1. 2, 3. receive his Commands; and in a word, that * *he was the greateſt among the men of the eaſt*, having none to compare with him for Subſtance in all that part of the World; and yet, behold, in one Day's time he has loſt them all, and is left alone to bemoan his deſolate condition. And this may be the fate of any whoſe Grandeur thou moſt admireſt, or from whoſe Liberality and Kindneſs thou haſt the greateſt Expectation.

3. Should thy Friend or Patron be in no danger of any ſuch Misfortune, his Life is but a very tranſient uncertain Tenure, and though his Riches be not taken from him, none knows how very ſoon he may be ſnatch'd from them; and then they may come into the Hands of one that will have no farther concern for thee. It is no unuſual ſight to behold perſons of great Hopes and Expectations expoſed to as great hardſhips, when their Patrons die, upon whom they had their Dependance. Then they ſadly † experiment, if not before, how inſufficient a help the trueſt and kindeſt Friends are in times of Adverſity, and what reaſon they therefore have to ſecure to themſelves an Intereſt in God's Protection, who never dies, nor will ever fail any that heartily put their Truſt in him. To this the Royal *Pſalmiſt* adviſes, and from this ſame Conſideration, which I am now mentioning for the ſame purpoſe. *Put not your truſt in Princes, nor in the Son of Man, in whom there is no help. His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts periſh. Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whoſe hope is in the Lord his God.*

† Simulac perierit cui innitebaris, tanquam arundini fluctibus quaſſatæ, vento raptæ, nullus eris. *Scribanii Philoſ. Chriſt. cap.* 4.

The

The ſumme of all is, That there is no Safety in any kind of Natural Means, neither Wealth, Power, Perſonal Strength, Courage, Wiſdom, Diligence, nor the beſt of Friends, but only in Almighty God. He is a ſufficient Help in all Caſes, a ready Support in all Diſtreſs, and whoſoever ſtedfaſtly *caſts his Care upon him* need be afraid of nothing, becauſe he knows nothing ſhall befall him but for his good. But they that depend upon inferiour helps leave themſelves expos'd to every blaſt of Fortune, and when they meet with a ſhock, have nothing they can rely upon for a Redreſs. The whole World and all the parts of it are at God's command, and when Men have taken the utmoſt care that is poſſible to ſhelter themſelves by other means, his Quiver is ſtock'd with variety of Arrows againſt which there is no manner of Defence. He can plague us by thoſe of our own rank, ſuffering wicked Men to execute their Malice upon us, as a juſt puniſhment (though not ſo deſign'd by them) for all our Tranſgreſſions of his Divine Laws. Or he can ſend a Legion of inanimate Creatures upon the ſame Errand, which accordingly fail not to come at his Command. * *Fire and hail, ſnow and vapours, and ſtormy Winds fulfill his Word.* And ſo do the worſt of Diſeaſes, whenſoever he thinks fit to let them looſe upon a diſobedient and gainſaying People. And againſt theſe no preparation can be made, becauſe ſometimes they come too powerfull to be checked by all the Art or Care of Man, and becauſe when leſs violent, they come yet for the moſt part without obſervation or foreſight. † *And one of them* (as a very learned Author ſpeaks) *can execute another's Office or Charge, or every one accompliſh that*

* Pſal. 148. 8.

† Dr. *Jackſon's* 1ſt. Serm. on *Jer.* 26. 19.

that Work, which the Armies of Men might intend, but could not have executed.

That ſcarcity of Bread, or other Calamity, (as he proceeds) *which ſometime ſuddenly ariſeth in ſome Limb or Corner of a Kingdom, by want of Trade, or by ſhutting up too great a multitude of Ships, for a long time in one Harbour, whilſt the Enemy or Pirates annoy the Coaſts; how eaſily might it be much encreaſed, if he that keeps the Winds as in a Treaſure-houſe, ſhould ſhut up a greater multitude of Ships for a long time in the ſame Harbour by a contrary Wind, albeit their Enemies in the mean while became their Friends; albeit they were provided of an invincible Navy at an hours warning. Or in caſe they did know whence the Wind cometh, and whither it is going; or could ſo covenant, that it ſhould blow when and where they liſted; yet if the Lord of Hoſts be ſo pleaſed, he can bring a greater Dearth and Scarcity upon the moſt fertile Provinces of the Land, than either the Enemy, or contrary Winds can occaſion; either by withdrawing the ſweet Influence of the Heavens, or by corrupting the Seed lately ſown, or Corn ready to be reaped, with abundant moiſture. Or admit any People or Nation by Miracle or Divine Diſpenſation might have authority, not over the Winds only, but over the Clouds, the Rain, and Dew; or ſuch a power of ſhutting and opening Heaven, as Husbandmen have of letting in Brooks upon their Meadows, and taking them off again at their pleaſures; ſo as they might have Seed-time and Harveſt as ſeaſonable, their Fields as fruitfull, the Sea as open as their Hearts could deſire; yet the very freedom of Commerce and Traffick may bring in a greater Inconvenience (which no Plenty can hold out) than the Enemy, than unſeaſonable*

Wind

Wind and Weather could threaten. Want of Trade and want of Victuals are Plagues or Punishments put by God; but the Plague of Pestilence, which is oftimes the Companion of Peace and Plenty, the usual effect of free Trading or Traffick, is more terrible than either of the former wants. And thus may every part of the Reasonless Host accomplish what the other had omitted; and this in spight of all the Contrivances of the most cultivated Wit of Man to the contrary. In these and multitudes of other Cases of more common and ordinary Occurrence, it is as impossible for Mankind to protect us, as it is to pull the Stars from Heaven, or dry up the Waters of the Sea. The serious Meditation whereof must inevitably leave us in a very disconsolate condition, were it not that we have a good and a gracious God to whom we may apply our selves for Relief in all our Streights, and may be safe in his good Providence, when we can be so no ways else.

* *Cease ye therefore from Man*, the Wisest, the Stoutest, the Richest, the Carefullest, and the most Powerfull among the Sons of Men, *for wherein is he to be accounted of?* They that trust in God have an impregnable, a present, and an everlasting Defence, to which, whosoever fleeeth in his Distress, is sure to find Shelter. But † *Man is like to vanity, his days are a shadow that passeth away*; and he is therefore a very improper Instrument to be rested upon for Safety and Happiness either by himself or any else. And so are all his uncertain transitory Possessions, and outward imperfect Assistances; which can never answer his Expectations but by God's Blessing, nor any longer than seems good to his Divine Majesty. All their Power and Efficacy they receive

* Is. 2. 22.

† Ps. 144. 4.

ceive from him; and the way therefore to enjoy them to the beſt advantage is not to truſt to them in neglect of his gracious Protection, but to *caſt our Care upon him*, humbly intreating that he will mercifully condeſcend to take care of us.

* Jer. 9. 23, 24. * *Let not* then *the wiſe man glory in his wiſdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might; let not the rich man glory in his riches, but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he underſtandeth and knoweth the Lord, who exerciſeth lovingkindneſs, judgment and righteouſneſs in the earth*; that he conſiders that there is an infinitely wiſe and good God, who orders all things according to the pleaſure of his own Will, and that he hath learned to hope in him for a Bleſſing upon all his moſt valuable Enjoyments, and his moſt courageous, wiſeſt, and moſt laborious Undertakings. Since Scripture, Reaſon, and Experience teſtify, that the beſt of Men are nothing without him; common Prudence (were we not obliged to it in duty) would teach any conſidering Perſon to apply to him in all caſes, as the beſt, the only Security from fear of Evil, and the readieſt, the only effectual Succour in time of need.

So much concerning the Inſufficiency of all Natural Means, conſidered barely as ſuch, which when they may be lawfully made uſe of, are of no avail in order to our welfare, except as God is pleaſed to bleſs them to us.

SECT.

SECT. II.

BUT theſe Means may be conſidered alſo as unlawfull (which they too often happen to be) and which cannot therefore be ventured upon without ſin. And here my buſineſs will be to ſhew,

II. *The great Evil and Danger of them*, and that howſoever the Succeſs which ſuch indirect Attempts frequently meet with in the World may incline too many to look upon them as the propereſt Inſtruments for accompliſhing their Deſigns, they groſly deceive themſelves herein, as in truth they often find to their coſt. They may fanſie themſelves to outwit or overpower others, but by the juſt Judgment of God upon them for their Wickedneſs, the event ordinarily ſhews them to have moſt outwitted themſelves. * *Wilt thou ſpeak wickedly for God*, ſaid *Job, and talk deceitfully for him?* plainly intimating, that God being All-ſufficient of himſelf, hath no need of any of our Iniquities for effecting his Deſigns; for whatever he in his infinite Wiſdom determines, he knows how to perform it without our Aſſiſtance, but eſpecially without our Sin. Which being always an intolerable Abomination in his ſight, he therefore utterly diſallows of it in all caſes, as what can never be to his glory, though committed upon never ſo ſpecious a pretence. Though it were to preſerve a diſcountenanced Religion, or to ſave a ſinking Church, or upon any other the moſt weighty occaſion, he permits not a Lye to be told, much leſs an apparently ill Action to be done. And if it

* Job 13. 7.

it be not lawfull to ſpeak or act unrighteouſly for God, and with an intent to advance his Glory, who can conceive it ſafe to do it for our own ſakes, though in our moſt urgent Neceſſities? His Eye is always upon us, to obſerve all our Circumſtances, and to make proviſion for us, as he ſees moſt ſuitable to our needs. And if he think fit to lay his Hand heavy upon us, all our own attempts will ſignifie nothing towards the removal of it, till he ſhall be pleaſed to releaſe us. Whilſt they are agreeable to his Will, they may be uſefull for our Deliverance, but when contrary to it, we may juſtly look that they ſhould hinder and prevent, rather than be a means of promoting it. The Wiſe-man I am ſure is very expreſs to this purpoſe, when he affirms, That * *the righteouſneſs of the upright ſhall deliver them, but tranſgreſſors,* (Tranſgreſſors indefinitely, whoſoever they be, or upon whatſoever account they are ſuch) *ſhall be taken in their own naughtineſs.* And again, *a man,* ſaith he, † *ſhall not be eſtabliſhed by wickedneſs*; intimating, that all his ſinfull Contrivances how promiſing ſoever in appearance, ſhall not be ſufficient to do his buſineſs.

* Prov. 11. 6.

† c. 12. 3.

Since it is from God's Bleſſing alone (as I have been endeavouring to ſhew) that Succeſs is to be hoped for, and not from our own heartieſt Endeavours without it, and this Bleſſing we may be ſure is no longer to be rely'd upon than we keep to the obſervance of his Will, there is no room left to promiſe our ſelves Security when once we have begun to tranſgreſs his Laws. Men may involve themſelves in Labyrinths and inextricable Difficulties, by not waiting for God's Aſſiſtance, in his own time, and by his own means,

means, but they know not in any wise how to perfect their Designs without him. Whenever they go out of his way, though upon the fairest prospect of success, it is impossible to foresee what mischiefs they may bring upon themselves by those very means, whereby they vainly strive to secure themselves against them.

* *Morinus* mentions a Tradition of one of the Rabbins, containing a peculiar method of God's punishing a greedy Worldling, who sought to enrich himself by Sacrilege, and found himself at length to have been sadly impoverished by it. The Method he took was this; His Estate having brought him in a thousand Measures of Grain by the Year, instead of paying an hundred for Tithe, he with-held ten, and pay'd only ninety. Whereupon it pleased God to order, that the next Year, his Ground should yeild him but nine hundred Measures, being just the quantity he had tithed for the Year before. Upon this he brings but eighty, and accordingly the next Year his Income was but eight hundred; and so on, till it fell gradually to one hundred Measures in the whole, and might have come to less if he had not taken warning then, and penitently acknowledged his Offence, and resolv'd upon an amendment for the future. I don't vouch for the truth of this Relation; but however it naturally hints to us, how easie it is for God to find out wicked Men, when they think themselves most exquisitely subtile and private in their Iniquities, and to shew them how vain a matter it is to attempt the bringing their Designs about without him. All the pains that are taken in this case may be to no purpose, or to a very bad one, leaving persons at last in as ill,

* Exercitat. Bibl. 6. c. 5.

ill, if not a far worſe condition than they were in before.

For to make uſe of any kind of Sin in order to our welfare, is a very prepoſterous courſe in relation to Almighty God, arguing an unreaſonable diffidence in him, as if he would prove worſe than his word, and would not take due care of us, notwithſtanding he hath ſo oft and ſo plainly declared he will. It implies a diſtruſt that either he cannot, or will not help us, and ſo calls either his Power, or elſe his Goodneſs and Veracity into queſtion. Whence it muſt neceſſarily appear to be an act of high Diſingenuity and Undutifulneſs; and conſequently to be utterly unbecoming our Chriſtian Profeſſion. It is at beſt but a doing ill with a good intent. And how diſhonourable this is to Almighty God, and how dear it is like to coſt the Doer, unleſs prevented by a ſincere Repentance, may be collected from thoſe words of the Apoſtle S. *Paul*,

* Rom. 3. 8. * *And not rather (as we be ſlanderouſly reported, and as ſome affirm that we ſay) let us do evil that good may come; whoſe damnation is juſt.*

But becauſe the generality, even of them that call themſelves Chriſtians, are more in love with the things of this World, than with thoſe that are infinitely more valuable in another, and hence Arguments that relate to theſe, too frequently work more upon them than thoſe which are taken from the other, not to ſay, more than any that are brought from a bare conſideration of their Duty, I will therefore apply my ſelf to them in their own way, and endeavour to ſhew, that all ſinfull and unwarrantable practices in order to our Security and Happineſs, are very improper and diſadvantageous in regard to this preſent

ſent life, as well as a ready way to everlaſting Miſery in another; and ſo are intolerably dangerous in reſpect to both this and a future State. And particularly upon theſe following accounts.

1. Becauſe in ſeeking to help our ſelves by theſe means, * we may poſſibly take the direct contrary courſe to that we deſign, and may all the while be drawing upon our ſelves what we labour to avoid, or laying a ſure train to miſs of what we aim at. Conſidering the ſhallowneſs of our Capacities, it is eaſie to ſuppoſe, that we may be miſtaken, and may judge thoſe methods moſt conducive to our good, which either in their own nature, or in their neceſſary conſequence are moſt prejudicial to it; like him that in a fright caſts himſelf into the Water for fear of being drowned, or runs into the Fire to eſcape burning; or † like a ſick Man, whoſe Diſeaſe many times makes him moſt earneſtly deſire thoſe things that are moſt hurtful to him, whilſt in that condition. Theſe Perſons do not intend their own Ruine, but not having the proper uſe of their Underſtanding, by reaſon of an unuſual commotion and diſorder of the Animal Spirits, putting them for the preſent beſides themſelves, they cannot judge aright of what they do; and this makes them act in direct contradiction to what they would, if they were truly ſenſible of their own caſe. And whilſt Mankind in general have their apprehenſions of things bewildered in like ſort, though not to the ſame degree, what

* Ἐνεκάλει τοῖς ἀνθρώποις περὶ τῶν πόνων, αἰτιᾶσθαι λέγων αὐτοὺς ἀγαθὰ τὰ αὐτοῖς δοκοῦντα, καὶ οὐ τὰ καλ' ἀλήθειαν. Diog. Laert. l. 6. in vita Diog. Cynici.

† Ægrotantes contraria delectant, & cum corpus hominis adverſa valetudo poſſederit, contra ſalutem ſuam à laborantibus perverſa poſcuntur. *Jul. Firmic. Matern. de err. gent.*

else can be expected than that they should be continually running upon one Inconvenience or another, though not in so gross a manner? We are neither competent Judges of what is really best for us, nor how what we think so may be best obtained, and must therefore inevitably lie exposed to multitudes of Mischiefs, whilst we take upon us to be our own carvers.

1. We know not what is really best for us. Every one is sensible enough what it is he actually desires, but who is it understands what state or condition of life is in truth most desirable for him? Here we are all at a loss, being too liable to wish for what, if granted, might prove no less destructive to us, than *Rachel*'s desire of Children
* Gen. 30. 1. was to her. * *Give me Children*, said she, *or else I die.* But the accomplishment of this desire cost her her life, instead of comforting her as she expected, with the sight and enjoyment of her Off-spring. For though upon the birth of
† v. 23. her first born † *Joseph*, she blessed her self to think that *God had taken away her reproach*, that lay upon her for her Barrenness, yet no sooner
‖ c. 35. 17, 18. was she made the Mother of ‖ *Children* by another birth, but *she died of her hard labour.* When we leave it to God to choose for us, we are sure we cannot do amiss, because we have one in this case to take care of us, who best understands our Wants, and is best able to relieve them. But when we seek to take this work out of his hands, we are apt to run our selves into needless troubles, for want of Judgment to discern wherein our true Interest consists. * This Estate, that Preferment, such a Post of Honour, looks very charming, but we know not what Mischiefs and In-

* Θέλω ἐλύμπια νικῆσαι, ἀλλὰ σκόπει καθηγούμενα αὐτοῦ, καὶ τὰ ἀκόλουθα· καὶ οὕτως ἂν τοι λυσιτελῇ, ἅψου τοῦ ἐρ-

Inconveniencies are to go along with it, as its inseparable attendants, which if we did, there would appear far less cause to be fond of it. We cannot foresee all the Difficulties that are to be undergone in order to it, what canvassing there may be for it, what sneaking and cringing there must be, and what services undertaken to obtain it. And when this is done, and the prize obtained, we are not aware what envy it may create us, what perplexing cares for securing our Interest in it may incessantly molest us, what other burdens it may bring upon us, or how unfit our selves may be for such a new course of life. Our Heads perhaps may grow giddy if raised too high, and we may be in danger of falling lower than we are at present. Instead of wholsome Food, we may desire what in the consequence will prove meer Poison; and in most particulars it is almost an equal lay, (as * a late learned Divine speaks) that we do so.

γε· δεῖ σε εὐτακτεῖν, ἀναγκοφαγεῖν, ἀπεχεσθαι πεμμάτων, &c. Arr. Epictet. l. 13. c. 15.

* Dr. *S. ot's* Christian Life, Part 1. c. 3. n. 6.

2. And no less prone are we to err in the choice of means for the obtaining what we thus desire. It is above Humane Capacity to dive into the wise Methods of God's Providence, and fathom the measures he propounds to himself for the Government of the World, or to discover the several windings of the train he lays for bringing his Ends about. No Man is sensible what unforeseen impediments will arise, to obstruct his most plausible Contrivances, nor what may be the effect of them; and how then can any one think himself able certainly to attain his End? Had *Joseph's* Brethren aimed at his advancement, they would, no doubt, have pitched upon any other method for it, sooner than to sell him to the *Ismaelites*,

maelites, to be a Slave all his days. Yet this they afterwards found to be the way, whereby the All-wise God had determined to exalt him
* Gen. 45. 8. to the Government of * *Egypt*, to be *a father to Pharaoh, and Lord of all his house, and ruler throughout all the land.* And on the contrary,
† 1 King. 2. 24, 25. had † *Adonijah* known before-hand that his request of *Abishag* the *Shunamite* to be given him to Wife, would have been the occasion of his Death, and not of his wish'd Succession to the Throne of *Israel*, he would never have entreated of *Bathsheba* to petition her Son *Solomon* on this
‖ 2 Sam. 15. 1, &c. behalf. As neither would ‖ *Absalom* have tried by Flatteries and Fawning to steal away the Peoples Hearts, whereby to usurp his Father's Crown, if he had foreseen that this would prove his inevitable ruine.

In a word, there is no Man sure not to be entrap'd in the works of his own Hands, or ensnared in his subtilest and best laid Devices. And therefore none, if he certainly knew wherein his present Interest consists, could yet have any reason to perswade himself, that his endeavours for promoting it shall never have a quite contrary tendency. But when neither of these are understood, when we neither know what makes truly for our welfare, nor by which means what we think such may be securely advanced, what unpardonable folly must it be in any one, out of a fond conceit for his own Abilities, to trust to these for Safety and Happiness, rather than to the gracious Protection of Almighty God; or in other terms, for any one to dare purposely to commit the least sin, though for avoiding the greatest hurt?

2. But

2. But the impropriety and disadvantage of these attempts is farther manifest, because if we really knew wherein our present Interest consists, and which were the most natural and usefull means for promoting it, this one fault of their being sinfull, and consequently, displeasing to Almighty God, were enough to defeat the whole design of them. For,

1. When it appears that God is about to inflict his Judgments upon us, to endeavour the avoiding of them by any unlawfull means is no better than an attempt to frustrate his Designs. And how vain this is the Wise Man informs us, saying, * *There are many devices in a man's heart, nevertheless the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand.* In which words is averr'd, that though Men may plot and contrive, and when they impatiently desire what they have not, or are possessed with a fearfull expectation of some impending Calamity, or groan under some heavy Burden, may employ their Wits to find out means of removing these their fears or troubles, yet if these means agree not with the Will and Word of God, and the wise Determinations of his Providence, their Purposes must needs become abortive, there being, as he speaks in another place, † *No wisdom, nor understanding, nor counsel, against the Lord.* God is infinite in Knowledge and Power, and ‖ *there is no searching of his understanding*, nor any resisting his Arm. * *He doth according to his will in the army of heaven, and amongst the inhabitants of the earth, and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, what dost thou?* And † *those that walk in Pride*, as all do who thus inconsiderately set themselves to countermine his proceedings concerning them, *he is able*

* Prov. 19. 21.

† c. 21. 30.

‖ Is. 40. 28.

* Dan. 4. 35.

† v. 37.

to abaſe. This the great *Nebuchadnezzar* found to his ſorrow, when he had been magnifying his own Glory and Grandeur, the ſtateliness of his Palace, and the extent of his Dominions, the might of his Power, and the honour of his Majeſty, and was hereupon immediately driven from among Men, and forced to herd with the Beaſts of the Field, * till he was brought *to bleſs, and praiſe, and honour the moſt high, who liveth for ever*, and to acknowledge, that *his dominion is an everlaſting dominion, and his kingdom from generation to generation.* And who art thou, O Man, that thinkeſt to withſtand his decree? or how wilt thou be better able than this potent Monarch to defend thy ſelf againſt him? The leaſt thou canſt poſſibly expect in this caſe, is, that he ſhould withdraw his Bleſſing from theſe thine endeavours, and render them fruitleſs for want of it.

* v. 34.

To this purpoſe the excellent S. *Chryſoſtome* comments upon thoſe words of our Bleſſed Saviour, † *Behold I ſend you forth as ſheep in the midſt of Wolves; be ye therefore wiſe as Serpents, and harmleſs as Doves.* ‖ 'Let us therefore, *ſaith he*, be a-'ſhamed to act contrarily, by ſetting 'upon our Enemies like Wolves. For 'ſo long as we retain the Meekneſs of 'Sheep, and act like them, we are 'ſure to come off Conquerors. 'Though many thouſands of Wolves 'ſhould encompaſs us, we ſhall yet be 'able to overpower and ſubdue them. 'But if our ſelves once become Wolves, 'we muſt expect thenceforward to be 'overcome; becauſe hereby we loſe 'our

† S. Matt. 10. 16.

‖ Αἰσχυνώμεθα τοίνυν οἱ τὰναντία ποιοῦντες, οἱ ὡς λύκοι τοῖς ἐχθροῖς ἐπιτιθέμενοι· ἕως γὰρ ἂν ὦμεν πρᾶοι, νικῶμεν· κἂν μύριοι περικυκλώσωσιν ἡμᾶς λύκοι, περιγινόμεθα, καὶ κρατοῦμεν· ἂν δὲ γενώμεθα λύκοι, ἡττώμεθα· ἀφίστασθαι γὰρ ἡμᾶς ποιεῖ τῆς βοηθείας. D. Chryſoſt. in loc.

'our beſt ſecurity, the care and protection of 'the Shepherd.

2. In flying to unlawfull Means in order to our welfare, we take the ſureſt courſe to ſet God at enmity with us, provoking him not only to deny us his Bleſſing, but purpoſely to blaſt all our beſt-laid Deſigns. This is a direct violation of his Laws, and may juſtly excite him to plague us far beyond our utmoſt fears. It is to ſhew more regard to Man, or other inferiour cauſes than to God himſelf, the Supream Lord and Governour, the great Creator, and prime mover of all things. And how terrible the Conſequence of this may be, he beſt knows, in whoſe power it is to make us as miſerable as he pleaſes. I am very ſure he deals very graciouſly with us, if he be not hereby prevailed with to inflict upon us ſome ſorer Judgment, than any we might hope to prevent, or remove by it.

And the reaſon is plain, for when Men betake themſelves to theſe ſiniſter courſes for aid, they are ſo far from *caſting their Care upon God*, that they do what they can to take it off from him, and to put themſelves together with all their concerns, out of his Protection into their own, as if they underſtood their own Wants better than he does, or could make better proviſion for themſelves than he will. Or rather, it is no leſs than a going from God to the Devil for help; and conſequently is the moſt effectual contrivance for bringing down the Severities of his Vengeance upon them, to puniſh them for this their Wickedneſs.

This the People of the *Jews* ſadly experimented, when they had uſed their utmoſt Intereſt and Endeavours to get our Bleſſed Saviour put

to death, leaſt otherwiſe the more powerfull
* S Jo. 11. 48. * *Romans* might be tempted to come againſt them, and *take away both their place and nation*, but by this ſame Project, as uſefull as they thought it for their Preſervation, provoked God to deliver them up into the Hands of the ſame People, againſt whom they ſought thus impiouſly to ſecure themſelves. They looked upon the removal of our Saviour out of the way, as the propereſt expedient for diverting ſo potent an Adverſary; but becauſe this was a moſt heinous Offence againſt God, it made way for that very Deſtruction to overtake them, which they were thus earneſtly deſirous to prevent.

And the like unhappy diſappointment the learned Dr. *Hammond* underſtood our Bleſſed Lord to have threatened to his Diſciples, if they ſhould ſeek to ſave themſelves, from the numerous dangers whereto they were obnoxious, by
† S. Matt. 16. 25. any indirect and forbidden means. † *Whoſoever will ſave his life*, ſaith our Lord, *ſhall loſe it*; *and whoſoever will loſe his life for my ſake ſhall find it*. As if our Saviour ſhould have ſaid, 'They who by Perſecutions ſhould be brought to 'apoſtatize, and joyn with the *Jews*, ſhould with 'them be certainly deſtroy'd in the great ſlaugh-'ter of them; but they that ſhould hold out, 'and venture the utmoſt for the confeſſion of the 'Truth, ſhould be moſt like to be delivered from 'that dreadfull Deſtruction in which the reſt
|| Euſeb. Eccl. Hiſt. l. 3. c. 5. 'would be involved. Theſe were to have a || *Pella* provided for them, as a Reward of their Fidelity, a place of retreat wherein to ſhelter themſelves, whilſt thoſe others, who thought to ſecure themſelves by their ſinfull compliances were cut off.

In

In ſhort, he that ſtudies to ſave himſelf, or to promote his Intereſt, by any known ſin, takes a very likely way to have his Deſigns fruſtrated, and in effect, embraces what he hates, and opens a door for all thoſe Evils againſt which he ſo fooliſhly arms himſelf to enter in. He prepares to himſelf needleſs difficulties, and at the ſame time deprives himſelf of that ſuccour, without which he could not think to be ſafe in better Circumſtances. And as if this were not misfortune enough, he farther expoſes himſelf to all the Miſeries which are threatened to the Refractary and Diſobedient. By forſaking his God to ſave himſelf, he flies from him who alone can protect him againſt all Diſaſters, and runs into the open jaws of the Devourer. He takes care to create himſelf an Enemy, that will eaſily turn all his wiſeſt Counſels into Fooliſhneſs, and render all his Undertakings ſucceſleſs; and who on the other hand can as eaſily overwhelm him with all ſorts of Plagues and Calamities.

3. If God ſhould be pleaſed to grant ſucceſs to theſe Attempts, beyond what there is any reaſon to hope for; * this poſſibly may be but to make way for ſome ſeverer miſery to overtake us. Such as *Philip* of *Macedon* was afraid of, when having received three joyfull Meſſages at the ſame time, namely, that his Chariot had come off Victor in the *Olympick* Games, that his General had routed his Enemies, and that his Wife had born him a Son, cried out hereupon, with hands lift up to Heaven, † *Oh that after ſo much good news, it might*

* Ὡς εἴρηται,
Πολλοῖς ὁ δαίμων, οὐ κατ' εὔνοιαν φέρων,
Μεγάλα δίδωσιν εὐτυχήματ', ἀλλ' ἵνα
Τὰς συμφορὰς λάβωσιν ἐπιφανεστέρας.
Ariſtot. Rhetor. l. 2. c. 24.

† Ὦ δαῖμον, εἶπε, μέτριόν τι τούτοις ἀντίθες ἐλάττωμα. Plutarch. de Conſolat. ad Apollon.

might be only some common calamity that should befall him! Or as befell *Theramenes* at *Athens*, who having met with a wonderfull Deliverance (when the House wherein he was with others at Supper had fallen and slain the rest of the Company without hurting him) was * shortly after put to a more cruel Death by his Collegues in the Tyranny.

God may please for the clearer manifestation of his Power, † to exalt wicked Men, and give them their fill of Wealth and Authority, and Honour, and to allow them the free enjoyment of all these, only in order to their heavier fall. As he did sinfull *Pharaoh*, of whom the Scripture saith expresly, ‖ *In very deed for this cause have I raised thee up, for to shew in thee my power, and that my name may be declared throughout the earth*; meaning, 'That God had not only '* set him in an eminent station, by 'by making him a potent King, but 'had moreover † preserved him alive 'after all the Plagues his Land had 'suffered for his Obstinacy and Disobedience, had made him ‖ to stand '(as it is in the Original) to the intent he might become a lasting Monument of 'the Divine Vengeance upon incorrigible Offenders. An Example well worthy the serious consideration of those that promise themselves Safety any other way than God has appointed. For howsoever such flatter themselves in their Wickedness, at present they know not how soon a Day

* Μετ' ὀ πολὺν δ' χρόνον καταστρεβλωθεὶς ὑπὸ τῶν συντυράννων ἐτελεύτησεν. Ibid.

† Consuesse enim Deos immortales, quo gravius homines ex commutatione rerum doleant, quos pro scelere eorum ulcisci velint, his secundiores interdum res, & diuturniorem impunitatem concedere. *J. Cæs. de bello Gall. l.* 1. Miseri in hoc altius tolluntur, ut decidant altius; hi enim ut victimæ ad supplicium saginantur, ut hostiæ ad pœnam coronantur. *Min. Fel.*

‖ Exod. 9. 16.

* Ἐξήγειρά σε. Rom. 9. 7.

† Διετηρήθης, apud 72. Interp.

‖ העמדתיך

[a] Day of Reckoning may come; and then they must look to pay dear for all their Abominations.

Sometimes God may permit Mens Ungodlineſs to ſucceed, and to anſwer their Expectations for a while, but withall, may cauſe it to be attended with ſome other inconvenience, that ſhall more than compenſate for all the benefits ariſing from it. As in the caſe of * *Gehazi*, who hoped to make an advantage of the lye with which he purſued *Naaman* the *Syrian*, and ſo he did for the preſent; but then upon his return into his Maſter's ſight, † he was ſeized with a Leproſie that was never to leave him all the days of his life, nor his Seed after him.

* 2 King. 5. 21, 22, 23.

† v. 27.

Sometimes he may cut them off before they come to taſt the fruit of what they have unlawfully obtained, as he did ‖ *Potamius* Biſhop of *Lisbon*. This Biſhop was firſt Orthodox, but afterwards denied the Faith, and turned *Arian*, in hope of an Eſtate to be beſtowed upon him by the Emperour. Which, though granted him, proved a very poor Recompenſe for his Infidelity; for as he was going to take poſſeſſion of it, a certain pain *ſeized him in his Tongue, wherewith he had blaſphemed God*, and his Diſtemper encreaſing upon him, *he died by the way* * *without the ſatisfaction of having ſeen what he ſo eagerly thirſted after.*

‖ Fauſt. & Marcell. libell. precum.

* Nullos fructus fundi vel viſione percipiens. *Ibid.*

Sometimes again he may let Men go on in their Wickedneſs, and proceed from one degree of it to another, and after a while may put a very remarkable ſtop to their career, and perhaps not without the loſs of their Life. As it happened to *Hoſius* Biſhop of *Corduba*, who after he had been zealous for the Orthodox Faith in the

the time of the *Arian* Persecution, and had censured and rejected the forenamed *Potamius* for his Apostacy from it, was yet wrought upon in his old Age, * by the threats and punishments of the Emperour *Constantius*, to subscribe the *Arian* Confession, and returned back from him into *Spain*, with Commission to banish all that refused to join in a Communion with him. But it came to pass, that being about to pronounce the Sentence of Deposition upon *Gregory* of *Eliberis*, in order to his Banishment, he was struck by the Hand of God, † *Fell from his Seat to the earth, and there expired; or at least had his speech taken away, and was carried out for dead.*

* Πληγαί τε καὶ στρεβλώσεις τῷ πρεσβύτῃ προσέφερον· διὸ καὶ ὑξ ἀνάγκης τὸ τότε δοθείσαις ὑπαγορεύσεσι καὶ συνέθετο, καὶ ὑπέγραψε. Socrat. Hist. E. l. 2. c. 31.

† De sessu in terram eliditur, atque illic exspirat; aut, ut quidam volunt obmutuit. Inde tamen effertur ut mortuus. *Libel. prec. Ibid.*

Or else when Men grow impetuous, and excessively extravagant in their Impieties, he may seem to connive at them for a time, and when that is past may take them down, in the height of their Pride, and make them acknowledge his Hand visibly upon them for their Crimes. Thus he avenged himself upon two notorious Adversaries to his Church, *Antiochus* a profess'd Enemy to the *Jewish*, and *Julian* a subtile underminer of the Christian Worship and Religion. The former of whom having forbidden the *Jews* to Sacrifice, as their Law requir'd of them, having offer'd Swines-flesh upon their Altar to profane it, having prohibited their initiatory rite of Circumcision, and burnt their Scriptures, yet before his death, finding his illness very hard upon him, he declared to his Friends about him, ‖ that *he*

‖ Ὅτι ταῦτα πάσχει κακώσας τὸ Ἰουδαίων ἔθ-

he endured all this for the Cruelties he had exercised upon the Jews, and for his robbing their Temple, and despising their God. The latter had been educated from his Childhood in the Christian Religion, and though as he grew up he began to have most Inclination for the Heathen Idolatries, * yet openly made profession of Christianity, and took upon him a Monastick Life, and was a Reader in the Church of *Nicomedia* in *Bithynia*, till at length he thought it a proper time to lay aside his Vizard, and then he disowned the Religion he had hitherto profess'd, went publickly to the Heathen Temples, sacrificed to the Images he found there, and called himself their High-Priest. Thenceforward he set himself against the Christians, and spake and wrote against their Doctrine, [1] trying all ways, [2] by fair Words, [3] by Promises and Rewards, [4] by Terrours and Sufferings, [5] by Toleration, [6] by Tricks and subtile Artifices to win them off from their Christianity. But after all, it is related of him, that having received his mortal Wound, and considering the Hand of God upon him in it, [7] he could not but declare (though he did it in an undecent manner) that that Christ, whom he had so despised and reproached, and whose Worship he had laboured by so many various methods to extirpate out of the World, was now too hard for him.

νος παρεδήλου, συλήσας τε τὸν ναὸν, καὶ τοῦ Θεοῦ καταφρονήσας. Josep. Antiq. l. 12. c. 13.

* Socrat. Hist. Eccl. l. 3. c. 1. Am. Marcel. l. 22. Theod. Hist. l. 3. c. 2. Greg. Naz. στηλιτευτ. α.

[1] Sozom. Hist. l. 5. c. 17.

[2] Theod. l. 3. c. 22.

[3] Theod. l. 3. c. 16.

[4] Socrat. l. 3. c. 13, 14, 15, 16, 19.

[5] Am. Marcell. l. 22. Optat. Meliv. l. 2.

[6] Soz. l. 3. c. 17, 18. Greg. Naz. Stel. 1.

[7] Quanquam Nazarenum nostrum, & ut ipse solebat dicere Galilæum, statim in prælio senserit. *D. Hieron. Epist.* 84. Μετὰ τὴν πληγὴν ἀμωσγέπως συνῆκεν ὅθεν ἐβλάβη, καὶ τὸ αἴτιον τῆς συμφορᾶς οὐ παντελῶς ἠγνόησε· λέγεται γὰρ ὅτι ἐτρώθη, αἷμα ἐκ τῆς ὠτειλῆς ἀρυσάμενος, εἰς τὸν αἰθέρα ἀκοντίσαι, οἷά γε πρὸς τὸν φαινο-

Thus

μενον τὸν χριστὸν ἀφορῶν, καὶ τὸν ἰδίας σφαγῆς αὐτὸν ἐπαιτιώμενος. Sozom. l. 6. c. 3. Ἐκεῖνον δέ φασι δεξάμενον τὴν πληγὴν, εὐθὺς πλῆσαι τὴν χεῖρα τοῦ αἵματος, καὶ τοῦτο ῥίψαι εἰς τὸν ἀέρα, καὶ φᾶναι, νενίκηκας Γαλιλαῖε. Theodorit. l. 3. c. 25.

Thus it pleases the great God to execute his Wrath in an extraordinary and signal manner, when Men grow audacious and incorrigible in their Wickedness, and provoke him to that degree, that he can no longer bear with them. All the present success such meet with is no security to them against a more deadly stroke, when the measure of their Iniquities is filled up. This is the proper season for him to vindicate his own Honour and Justice, and to let themselves and the rest of the World see, that he is not an unconcerned Spectator of their doings. And accordingly he takes occasion many times to inflict some immediate Judgment upon them; or else he makes some other way for his Indignation, which, if attended to, must necessarily convince them of their folly, in having departed from his Precepts, how inviting soever the temptation might have appeared to them.

And if we appeal to the ordinary course of the World, it must be acknowledged, that though a Man may contrive to advance himself for the present (which yet is more than many can do with all their Cunning, and all their Wickedness) though a Man may contrive, I say, to advance himself for the present, by Cheating, Oppression, Sycophantry, Perjury, Subornation, Time-serving, or other evil Practices; these seldom last long without recoiling upon him to his sorrow. They may prove serviceable whilst he can put a fair gloss upon them; but if once they come to be publickly taken notice of, his Credit

is

is presently impaired by them, and either he is at length undone, or at least, finds himself in worse circumstances than if he had kept to the undoubted Rules of Honesty. And such an one being brought into Streights, his former ill dealings not only occasion him fewer Friends amongst Men to assist him in his necessity, but give him likewise just ground to expect far less of the Divine Favour and Compassion than he might otherwise have hoped for. Whence his fall becomes the greater, and the more grievous, the greater * by how much the higher he had been advanced, and the more grievous by how much the less pitied he falls by those about him, and the less hope he hath therefore of a recovery.

* Nam in omni adversitate fortunæ infœlicissimum genus est infortunii, fuisse fœlicem. *Boet. de Consol. Philos. l. 2. pros. 4.*

And the case is much the same in relation to Treasons, Rebellion, Robbery, Murther, or other the like dangerous, as well as unconscionable Practices. Except that these not only fail in time to answer the Offender's Expectation, (as the former) but besides, are frequently attended with some ignominious punishment at the last, and it may be to the utter overthrow of themselves, and their Estates, and Honours together at one blow; after this manner verifying the saying of the Wise-man, † *As the fish that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare; so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them*; and that other of the *Psalmist*, ‖ *When the wicked spring as the grass, and when all the workers of iniquity do flourish, it is* (this is the time, whilst they are thus in their Splendor) *that they shall be destroyed for ever.*

† Eccles. 9. 12.

‖ Ps. 92. 7.

But

But farther, if through the immenſe Clemency of God, the Sinner ſhould eſcape all theſe forementioned Inconveniencies, neither erring in his Choice, nor in the Means he uſes in purſuit of it, nor having his Deſigns defeated, nor any heavier Judgment inflicted upon him during the whole time of his abode in this World; ſuppoſing all this, ſtill the impropriety and diſadvantage of unlawfull Means in order to our welfare will appear.

3. Becauſe there are other dreadfull miſchiefs that uſually accompany them. The danger is not over upon obtaining the End aimed at, but there are ill conſequences of the Means in order to it yet remaining, which will more than recompenſe for the benefits redounding from them. And eſpecially theſe two.

1. The trouble, anxiety, and perplexity of Mind, that may juſtly be expected to follow upon them here in this World.

2. The intolerable tortures that are due to them in the other.

1. The trouble, anxiety, and perplexity of Mind, that may juſtly be expected to follow upon them here in this World. For it cannot be other than a very conſiderable abatement of any the greateſt outward Happineſs, * to remember that it has been acquired by the wilfull tranſgreſſion of

* Nullum maleficium ſine formidine eſt, quia nec ſine conſcientiâ ſui. *Tertull. adv. Marcio. l. 4. c. 17.* Nemo malus fœlix. *Juv. Sat. 4. v. 8.* κακὰ μείζω πάσχει διὰ τοῦ συνειδότος ὁ ἀδικῶν βασανιζόμενος, ἢ ὁ τῷ σώματι καὶ τῶν πληγαῖς μαστιγούμενος. *Pythagoræ fragment. proſ. apud Hieroclem, & Demophilii ſentent. Pythag.* Si ſera Deorum vindicta ſit, noluerunt tamen impios ipſo in facinore adeo exultare, ut non angore conſcientiæ fraudiſq; cruciatu, tanquam domeſticis furiis, affiduè vexentur. *Cic. Conſol. ad Brut.*

God's

God's Laws. When the Poſſeſſor bleſſes himſelf moſt in his unjuſt attainments, this one thought will be enough (like the * Hand-writing on the Wall to *Belſhazzar*) to imbitter all his Joys, to ſtrike his Limbs into a fit of trembling, to cover his Face with paleneſs, and fill his Mind with horrour and confuſion. What a damp muſt it be to his compleateſt Satisfactions, to recollect, that they have been the purchaſe of his Sin, and that he muſt therefore look to ſuffer one day ſeverely for them? How gawdily ſoever he may appear, or whatever ſhew he make, † his Mind may yet be very uneaſie, ‖ *like the troubled Sea, whoſe Waters caſt up Mire and Dirt.* And none but himſelf knows what private Pangs and Agonies ſeize him in his moſt Halcyon days; * what Anguiſh, Fear, and Grief poſſeſs his Soul; how diſſembled his Joys are for the moſt part, and how much more miſerable he is in truth, than thoſe who are moſt tempted to envy his Succeſs. His ſeeming advantages above others are no evidence that all is right within; for notwithſtanding theſe, his Mind may be continually upon the Rack, and he may hereby pay dearly, even at preſent, for what he ſo values himſelf upon.

* Dan. 5. 6.

† Dii deæque, quàm malè eſt extra legem viventibus? quicquid meruerunt, ſemper expectant. *Petron. Arb. Satyr.* c. 85.

‖ Iſ. 57. 20.

* Pœna autem vehemens, ac multò ſævior illis, Quas aut cæditius gravis invenit, aut Radamanthus, Nocte dieq; ſuum geſtare in pectore teſtem. *Juv. Sat.* 13. *v.* 195.

Inſtances are frequent in Hiſtory, of Perſons whom no outward Grandeur, Wealth, or Power, could ſet at reſt, that their own guilty Conſciences ſhould not fill their Souls with dread and terrour, as if they were juſt upon the point of coming to account for their Iniquities. Such

as [1] *Tiberius*, [2] *Caligula*, and [3] *Anaſtaſius* of *Rome*, [4] *Dionyſius* of *Corinth*, [5] *Lewis* XI. of *France*, and [6] *Richard* III. of our own Nation, *&c.* whoſe frightfull Dreams by Night, and reſtleſs Fears by Day were a ſufficient confirmation of the Poet's Aſſertion, that [7] *Æſculapius* with all his Medicaments had no cure for a troubled Conſcience. If the greateſt affluence of outward Enjoyments could ſet a Man at eaſe, ſure Kings and Emperours ſhould have the beſt Title to it; yet theſe forementioned, and others ſhew, that they are many times farther from it than the meaneſt of their Subjects. When once the greateſt of Men rebell againſt God, on whom they have their whole Dependance for their Lives and all their Enjoyments, they may conclude, that he will have no regard to them more than others, but will be at leaſt as highly incenſed againſt them. And conſequently, they muſt have as much cauſe as any to dread the heavy effects of his Diſpleaſure.

[1] Tacit. Annal. l. 6. Sueton. in vit. Tiber. c. 63, 64, 65, 66.
[2] Id. in vit. Cal. c. 51.
[3] Zon. Annal. To. 3.
[4] Cic. Tuſc. Quæſt. l. 5. c. 20.
[5] P. de Comines. l. 6. c. 7.
[6] Speed, Baker, Truſſel, & al.
[7] Afferat ipſe licet ſacras Epidaurius herbas,
Sanabit nullâ vulnera cordis ope.
Ovid. l. 1. de pont. El. 4.

There is a great deal of Truth in that of the Moraliſt, That * *he who hath a guilty Conſcience may ſometimes be ſafe from any preſent danger, but never from the fear of it. For though his Sin be not yet diſcovered, he knows not how ſoon it may, and is diſturbed in his Sleep, and as oft as he mentions another's Wickedneſs, is poſſeſſed with a tormenting remembrance of his own.*

* Tutum aliqua res in malâ conſcientiâ præſtat, nulla ſecurum. Putat enim ſe etiamſi non deprehenditur, poſſe deprehendi, & inter ſomnos movetur, & quoties alicujus ſcelus loquitur, de ſuo cogitat. *Senec. Epiſt.* 105.

But if to this be added the Conſideration of another

ther Life, and the extremity of those dismal Tortures the Sinner must then expect to undergo, no wonder though he find himself very uneasie at the thoughts hereof. These will pursue him into his closest Retirements in spight of all the care he can take to prevent them, and will be as so many Darts piercing him to the quick. The remembrance of having acted unagreeably to his Profession, a sense of the guilt hereby contracted, and a fear of present Sufferings, together with the dread of an approaching Judgment, and the ineffable Terrours of the Lord in the other World, will cut him to the Soul, will even overwhelm him with Grief, and if duly attended to, will make him heartily repent, that ever he should have taken so indirect a course to promote his own welfare. And yet all this is but the beginning of Sorrows, and is nothing in comparison of what I mentioned in the Second place, namely,

2. The intolerable Tortures that are due to these Practices in a future state; when both Soul and Body shall be everlastingly punished in Hell-fire, with the Devil and his Angels. This will undoubtedly be the Portion of all that fear not God; and amongst others, in particular of those whose distrust of his Goodness hath put them upon unwarrantable Contrivances for their own Safety or Advancement. There is nothing more certain, than that * *we must all appear*, and God knows how soon, *before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad*; and then † *will he render to every man according to his deeds; to them who by patient continuance in well doing, seek*

* 2 Cor. 5. 10.

† Rom. 2. 6, &c.

for glory, and honour, and immortality, eternal life; but to them who obey not the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doth evil, though for never so plausible an End, and upon never so advantageous a Prospect. Nothing of this Nature will then be allow'd of, as an excuse for having transgressed God's Laws, or will deliver from the Severities denounced against such as knowingly transgress them. But howsoever they escape at present, they will be sure (unless a timely Repentance prevent it) to be confined hereafter to unavoidable, insupportable, and yet incessant Agonies.

And how disadvantageous a bargain this will be to them, may be collected from those words of our Blessed Lord to his Disciples, * *What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?* If a Man can possibly satisfie himself in any profitable, or otherwise usefull Wickedness at present, yet he will find a dolefull, and an amazing change, when he shall come at last to † *lie down in sorrows, and* ‖ *be tormented day and Night for ever and ever.* For if the gain of the whole World would be an unequal Compensation for the loss of a Soul, as our Saviour teaches us, how egregious must their folly be, that will dare to ruine their Souls beyond hope of recovery, only for some small inconsiderable advantage, which may soon be gone again, and whilst it lasts, may administer but little satisfaction; or for the avoiding some present uneasiness, which possibly might have been soon over without it, and much better and more desirably than with it.

* *S.* Matt. 16. 26.

† Is. 50. 11.

‖ Rev. 20. 10.

It

It is no slight matter to be condemned to everlasting Burnings amongst the accursed and damned Spirits, to languish in extremity of Hunger and Thirst, and Pain, and Grief, to have a guilty Conscience within, gnawing like a never-dying Worm, and without the company of Devils terrifying and tormenting, the heat of unquenchable Fire parching, dismal Darkness ever-shadowing us, and not one drop of Water, or any the least mitigation of these dolours to be procured upon any terms, nor any * hope that the utmost period of time, though after Millions of Millions of Ages, will put an end to them. There will be yelling and howling, weeping and gnashing of Teeth, Pangs and Agonies, Fear and Dread, blackness of Darkness, Horrour and Confusion, and no expectation of any Good, or of freedom from any Evil. And which is the Completion of all, there will be no end of these Sufferings, nor any the least hope of it. In short, † *Nec tormentis aut modus ullus, aut terminus*, these Torments will be infinite as to both their intenseness and their duration, will be unspeakably, unconceivably sharp, and yet withall will endure to all Eternity. Insomuch that *Ætna* and *Vesuvius* with all their Roarings, and all their fiercest and their hottest Streams of Sulphur, are a very faint Emblem of these more dreadfull Flames. Wherein the Flesh shall for ever fry, the Blood for ever boyl, the Veins be for ever scorched, the Nerves for ever rack'd, Serpents shall for ever devour the Body, and Furies for ever tear the Soul.

* Nec videt interea qui terminus esse malorum,
Possit, nec quæ sit pœnarum deniq; finis.
Lucret. l. 3.

† Min. Fel. Octav.

Oh the dire Vengeance of an incenſed Deity, that will thus eternally purſue and torture the guilty Sinner! and oh the intolerable ſtupidity therefore of venturing to expoſe one's ſelf to it, for whatſoever worldly advantage! It is a ſign perſons have little apprehenſion of their own good, when they will chooſe to be uneaſie in their Minds here, and thus exceſſively miſerable hereafter, rather than undergo a little preſent ſmart, or it may be than want ſome place of Honour or Profit, which yet they might be very well without, if they would but heartily endeavour it.

And thus I hope I have ſufficiently evinced the Unreaſonableneſs of ſeeking to Unlawfull Means for Relief in whatever Caſe, and by conſequence, that if People would ſtudy their own trueſt Intereſt, and would be wiſe to the beſt purpoſes, they muſt be ready to ſuffer, or part with any thing in this World, rather than commit the leaſt Sin, and not only ſo, but if they would take the ſureſt courſe to be happy at preſent, they muſt be very cautious of offending God, leaſt otherwiſe they provoke him to diſappoint their Hopes, to fruſtrate their Endeavours, and to plague them for all their Iniquities. *The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation, and to reſerve the* * *unjuſt*, or Unrighteous, under which Character they are certainly included, who make Sins their Refuge in their Diſtreſs, *unto the day of judgment to be puniſhed.* Thoſe that ſtick cloſe to him, relying faithfully upon his good Providence in all their Neceſſities, he both can and will ſave without the help of wicked Artifices for their Deliverance; and thoſe that betake themſelves to Unlawfull Means for Refuge, he

* Τὺς ἀδίκους, 2 S. Pet. 2. 9.

he will make either firſt or laſt to ſmart for it. And beſides, all Events at preſent depend more upon the Influence of God's over-ruling Providence, than upon any Humane Means; nor will the beſt-laid Deſigns turn to any account without his Concurrence. * *He bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth back again, maketh poor and maketh rich, bringeth low and lifteth up.* And *though in keeping to his ways*, as † a late learned and pious Author of our own Church ſpeaks, *we ſhould have no viſible preparations to truſt to, yet is Providence, the ground of our Confidence, full of inviſible ones; which do abundantly more aſſure Deliverance or Succeſs than any others; and which like* Eliſha's *Mountain full of Horſes and fiery Chariots, are diſcernible to the Eye of Faith, though not to the Eye of Fleſh.* He can make us happy if he pleaſes without our ſelves (though this be more than we are ordinarily to expect) but we can never make our ſelves ſo without him. The ſubtileſt undertaker can do nothing but by his aſſiſtance, which if he determine to with-hold, there needs nothing more to ‖ *diſappoint the devices of the crafty, ſo that their hands cannot perform their enterprize.*

* 1 Sam. 2. 6, 7.

† Of Chriſtian Prudence, &c. ch. 8.

‖ Job 5. 13

And in how forlorn a condition muſt Men be, when they fall into trouble, after they have parted with their Innocency, and dared even to damn their Souls, and hereby have forfeited the Favour of both God and Man to avoid it? If it be an abatement of the greateſt Temporal Happineſs, that it has been obtained by the help of ſome Sin (as I have endeavoured to ſhew it is;) much rather will it be a mighty aggravation of all the Sinner's Fears or Sufferings, Wants or Diſappointments, to conſider that he has ventur'd

thus hard for the cure of them, and yet has not been able to obtain it.

The propereſt Support under any affliction is, a ſenſe of a Man's own Integrity, an hope of God's Favour and Bleſſing, the Aſſiſtance of the Holy Spirit, and a Meditation of the cauſe of his Sufferings, and the Benefits that may redound from a good improvement of them. And ſince he that wilfully runs into any known Sin, evidently deprives himſelf of all theſe grounds of Comfort, his Caſe muſt be very highly deplorable, and ſo much the more, by how much the more provoking his Wickedneſs has been. In his moſt flouriſhing Eſtate * he will have juſt cauſe to repent of his Folly; but if he find all his Attempts prove vain, for want of God's Bleſſing, and be made to groan under the Evils which he had been ſtriving againſt, he will meet with a very conſiderable foretaſte of thoſe unconceivable Torments, to which without a ſincere and timely Repentance, he muſt be everlaſtingly conſigned in the other World.

* Προσέτατε δὲ ταῦτα, ὁ Χείλων· — ζημίαν αἱρεῖσθαι μᾶλλον ἢ κέρδος αἰσχρὸν· ἡ μὲν γὰρ ἅπαξ ἐλύπησε, τὸ δὲ διαπαντὸς. Diog. Laert. l. 1. in vit. Chil.

Never therefore let any think of ſinning for their own profit or ſecurity, of † *doing evil that good may come*, or of committing the leaſt Wickedneſs, for any the moſt deſirable End. For when all is done, there is no ſafety without God, who alone protects in the midſt of the greateſt Dangers, ſupports under the heavieſt Burdens, and on the other hand, as eaſily defeats the Expectations of the moſt ſecure in their Attempts againſt him. And

† Rom 3. 8. Τὸ ἴδιόν ἐστι τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ, φιλεῖν μὲν καὶ ἀσπάζεσθαι τὰ συμβαίνοντα, καὶ συγκλωθόμενα αὐτῷ· — μήτε φθεγγόμενόν τι παρὰ τὰ ἀληθῆ, μήτε ἐνεργοῦντα παρὰ τὰ δίκαια. Anton. Imp. Πρὸς ἑαυτὸν. l. 3. n. 14.

And although ſometimes, for reaſons beſt known to himſelf, he may permit the moſt ungodly undertakings to ſucceed, there is no ground to conclude, that he will do it whenſoever we engage in them, or indeed at any time, unleſs it be in Wrath, and to the intent, that we may be the rather * hardened in our Sins, and may hereby be prepared for the ſeverer Deſtruction.

* Nihil eſt infœlicius felicitate peccantium, quia pœnalis nutritur impunitas, & mala voluntas velut hoſtis interior roboratur. *D. Auguſt. Epiſt.* 5.

The Concluſion.

AND now for a Concluſion of the whole I only add, that the Deſign of this plain Diſcourſe is this, *That even in our loweſt, our worſt, and moſt deplorable eſtate, when our Grievances lie heavieſt upon us, and all other Means of Comfort fail us moſt, we be ready to reſt entirely upon God for a Redreſs, encouraging our ſelves with the thoughts of his infinite Loving-kindneſs, and never ſuffering our ſelves to doubt of his Protection, whatever our Circumſtances be, ſo long as we ſincerely apply our ſelves to him for it.* Be our Caſe never ſo dark and gloomy, and though whether we look to the Eaſt, or to the Weſt, or to the North, or to the South, there be no appearance of Safety from any of theſe Quarters, yet Almighty God can immediately command a Deliverance for us. It is but for him to *ſpeak the word, and his ſervants ſhall be healed.* No ſooner can he appear for our Relief, but all our Clouds ſhall immediately be diſſipated, and all our Fears removed, and * *our light ſhall break forth as the morning, and our health ſhall ſpring forth ſpeedily.* No ſuch Night of Affliction can poſſibly ſeize us, but that our † *Sun of Righteouſneſs* may preſently *ariſe with healing in his wings.*

* Iſ. 58. 8.

† Mal. 4. 2.

Our God can quickly curb the Fury of the moſt outrageous Adverſaries, either by converting them, as ‡ S. *Paul*; or mollifying them, as

‡ Act. 9. 5, 6.

as [2] *Ahaſuerus*, or [3] *Galerius*; or cutting them off in their Wickedneſs, as [4] *Pharaoh*, or [5] *Caligula*, or [6] *Domitian*; can [7] check the moſt dangerous Diſtempers, [8] ſupply the moſt preſſing Neceſſities, [9] and cure the moſt fixed and chronical Diſeaſes; can ſtop [10] the Lion's Mouth, [11] divert the fury of the Boar, and quell the fierceneſs of the Bear, and [12] reſtrain the violence of the Flames; can reſcue out of the greateſt Miſeries, [13] out of the Fiery-furnace with the three Children, [14] out of the Priſon with S. *Paul* and *Silas*, [15] out of the miry Dungeon with the Prophet *Jeremiah*, and [16] with *Jonas* out of the Whale's Belly, and from the depth of the Sea. There is no condition ſo forlorn, and paſt all hope, but he has a remedy in ſtore for it, if duly ſought to for his help. And he is as willing as he is able to exert his Power, and ſhew his Might in behalf of his poor Supplicants, that faithfully *caſt their care upon him*, and to let them ſee to their unſpeakable Comfort, that he is *a ſtrength to the poor, a ſtrength to the needy in his diſtreſs, a refuge from the ſtorm, a ſhadow from the heat, when the blaſt of the terrible ones, is as a ſtorm againſt the wall*; as the Prophet ſpeaks [17].

[18] *He taketh the ſimple out of the duſt, and lifteth the poor out of the mire, to ſet him with the Princes, even with the Princes of his people. He maketh the barren woman to keep houſe, and to be a joyfull mother of children.* He advanced

[2] Eſth. 8. 8, &c.
[3] Euſeb. Hiſt. Eccl. l. 8. c. 17. & Lactant. de mort. perſec. c. 33, 34.
[4] Exod. 14. 28.
[5] Joſeph. Ant. l. 18 c. 11.
[6] Lact. de M. perſ. c. 3.
[7] Numb. 16. 48.
[8] 1 King. 17. 6, & 16.
[9] S. Matt. 9. 20, &c.
[10] Dan. 6. 22.
[11] Cum apro ſubminiſtraretur (n. *Saturus*) venator potius qui illum ſubligaverat, ſuffoſſus ab eadem beſtia poſt diem muneris obiit. Et cum ad urſum ſubſtrictus eſſet in ponte, urſus de caveâ prodire noluit, itaq; ſecundo Saturus illæſus revocatur. *Paſſ. SS. Perpet. & Fælicit.*
[12] Τὸ πῦρ μὴ ἅψασθαι αὐτοῦ ἴσχυεν. De Martyr. S. Polycarpi.
[13] Dan. 3. 26.
[14] Act. 16. 26.
[15] Jerem. 37. 16, 17.
[16] Jon. 2. 10.
[17] Iſ. 25. 4.
[18] Pſ. 113. 6, 7, 8.
[19] *Moſes*

[19] Exod. 2. 3. & 3. 10.

[20] 1 Sam. 10. 1, 2.

[21] Pſal. 78. 71.

[22] Gen. 41. 40.

[23] Rex ego qui ſum Sicaniæ, figulo ſum genitore ſatus. *Auſon. Epig.* 8.

[24] Herodot. Cli. c 113. & Juſtin. Hiſt. l. 1.

[25] Plutarch. in vit. Rom. L. Flor. l. 1. c. 4. Liv. l. 1. c. 41. & al.

[19] *Moſes* from the Ark of Bullruſhes, to be the Conductor of his People out of *Egypt*, [20] *Saul* from ſeeking his Father's Aſſes to the Kingdom of *Iſrael*, [21] *David* from following his Father's Sheep to be Ruler of the ſame People, [22] *Joſeph* from a ſtate of Slavery, and a Priſon, to the ſecond place in *Egypt*; [23] *Agathocles* from among the Pots to be Governour of *Syracuſe*, and [24] *Cyrus* from a Shepherd's Cottage to be the Emperour of the *Medes* and *Perſians*, and [25] made *Romulus* from a like deſpicable condition Founder of the *Roman* Empire. And how oft may our ſelves have obſerved our own or others Mournings unexpectedly changed into Mirth, by ſome ſtrange alteration of Affairs, beyond what we could have look'd for? Why then ſhould we deſpair of the like in any other caſe? why ſhould we not rather meditate with our ſelves that our God is ſtill the ſame, as able as ever to relieve us, and he will do it as he ſees occaſion?

Deliverance is oftentimes neareſt, when nothing but ſudden and ſevere Deſtruction ſeems to hang over our Heads. Nor is there any fitter time for God to put to his Hand, to ariſe and exert his Almighty Power for the preſervation of his Servants, than when all other helps fail. When * *Judgment is turned away backwards, and juſtice ſtandeth afar off*, when *truth is fallen in the ſtreets, and equity cannot enter, and he that departeth from evil maketh himſelf a prey, then is the time for him to put on righteouſneſs as a breaſtplate,*

* Iſ. 59. 14, 15, 17, 19.

plate, and an helmet of ſalvation upon his Head, to put on the garments of vengeance for cloathing, and cover himſelf with zeal as with a cloak, and to repay fury to his adverſaries, and recompence to his Enemies, till they be brought to fear the name of the Lord from the weſt, and his glory from the riſing of the Sun. Or whatever other Grievance any labour under when it ſeems moſt incurable, it may in truth be ſooneſt cured.

Poſſibly ſome unobſerved natural way for an eſcape may in due time diſcover it ſelf; or if not, we know as certainly as God is, that he can order ſome other method of Relief for us. He ordinarily works by the uſe of Means (and this therefore is the courſe in which we are generally to expect his Bleſſings) but he is not confined to theſe, but works as eaſily without them, when they fail, and in direct oppoſition to them, when they are not for his purpoſe; and will be ſure to do ſo as oft as he ſees it requiſite. He will not proſtitute his Miracles, and make them cheap, by vouchſafing them when there is no ſufficient reaſon for them; but he will make uſe of thoſe, rather than break his word; which he never has done, nor ever can do, though the other he has done frequently, to the great conſolation and advantage of his faithfull Servants. And indeed God's Providence many times is neareſt and his help readieſt, when he ſees us the moſt deſtitute of Succour from any inferiour Means. *Our Fathers and Mothers may forſake us*, they from whom there is reaſon to hope for moſt kindneſs may caſt us off, and all other Creature Comforts may deceive us; but our good God will never do it, but *will take us up* in the midſt of all our Diſtractions. This being the time

when

when his Power is most seen in the delivery of his Servants, and so his glory most advanced by it, whilst Men are forced to acknowledge it to
* Psal. 64. 9. be in a signal manner * *God's doing*; and being moreover the time when his kindness is apt to make the deepest impression upon the persons delivered, who are never so sensible of the great benefit of ease and rest, as when almost worn out with some violent paroxism, some pinching and dismal Calamity; he will not therefore neglect so fair an opportunity for bringing Honour to his own great Name, and safety to his poor afflicted Creatures that run to him for shelter. And so himself professes by the Mouth of the holy *Psalmist*, pointing out this as the properest
† Psal. 50. 15. season of applying to him for assistance. † *Call upon me in the day of trouble*, or when thy Wants are most pressing, and thy Sorrows most pun-
‖ בְּיוֹם צָרָה gent in ‖ the time of streightening and distress, *I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorifie me.*

And there is no reason therefore to be discouraged, though he do not immediately work Deliverance for any that call upon him, since we know assuredly he will do it in his due time. He may possibly with-hold his Hand for a while on purpose that we may become the more earnest Supplicants at the Throne of his Grace, that we may be brought to *cry mightily unto him* for the redress we hope for at his Hand. And yet our condition may be nevertheless safe for the future, though at present it be most disconsolate. He will certainly take the best, that is his own, time to do us good, and perhaps will set us at rest when we think least of it.

And by how much the less he seems in the mean time to concern himself for us, so much the

the greater vertue it is to *cast all our Care* however *upon him.* It is no great matter to rest upon him, * when things go according to our own desires, and we have little more to hope or wish for from him. Nor is it much greater to do it, when Afflictions befall us, but at the same time bring with them also a plain and easie direction for getting rid of them in a little while. But the difficulty is to confide stedfastly in God, when he frowns upon us, when his Hand lies heavy upon us, and he appears unwilling to remove it; to be able to say with *Job*, that admirable example of a sure Trust in God, as well as of an unwearied Patience, † *Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him*; with the Patriarch *Abraham*, ‖ *To believe against hope*; and to be like the Apostles and first Disciples of our Lord, who * when they *were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that they despaired even of life*, and hence *could trust no longer in themselves*, yet continued to put their Trust *in God, which raiseth the dead*, and can at least as easily work any less Deliverance for us. For a Man to repose himself, and all his concerns after this manner upon the Divine Providence is an Argument of a truly Christian Temper, and evidences him to be acted by solid Principles, and that he is in good earnest in what he professes, and is fully perswaded of the truth of God's Promises, and has a Mind deeply affected with them. Nor is there any readier way to bring Honour to our Religion, than by shewing our selves thus intirely influenced by it, in that we can faithfully adhere to God, and *cast our Care upon him*, notwithstanding all the outward inconveniencies that may threaten us in, or for so doing.

* Imperia dura tolle, quid virtus erit. *Sen. Herc. Fur. act. 2. sc. 2.*

† Job 13. 15.

‖ Rom. 4. 15.

* 2 Cor. 1. 8, 9.

And

And we muſt therefore by no means content our ſelves to truſt in God in our Proſperity only, when there is leſs occaſion for the exerciſe of this Duty, but muſt perſiſt in it likewiſe, when he ſeems moſt plainly to have withdrawn his Countenance, and takes leaſt notice of us. We muſt not allow our ſelves to be diſcouraged in our hardeſt Circumſtances, as though he would no longer have any regard for us, leaſt ſo we provoke him by our Diffidence to deal with us according to our Surmiſes; but ſhould rather earneſtly endeavour to raiſe up our Spirits, and animate and comfort our ſelves with an aſſurance of his gracious Protection, as of a ſufficient cure for all our Maladies.

Wherefore never let any imagine, that they have performed this excellent Duty as they ought, till they have brought themſelves to that ſteady dependance upon God, that howſoever he deals by them at preſent, or whatſoever portion he in his infinite Wiſdom judges fit to allot them, they do not fail however to reſt ſatisfy'd with theſe his Determinations, in a confident expectation of Relief againſt them, when it ſhall be propereſt for them. He is the beſt Judge of all Mens Neceſſities, and what Application he knows to be truly requiſite, he will certainly adminiſter, though not always in the ſame manner as they deſire. And thoſe perſons muſt therefore be highly inexcuſable, that ſuffer any meaſure of Afflictions to affright them from that Affiance which they ought always to have in him.

It is an intolerable ſhame to behold meer Heathens chearfully reſigning themſelves up to God's diſpoſal, to wait for Safety from him alone, and only for ſo much of it as he ſhall be pleaſed to vouchſafe

vouchsafe them, and yet not endeavour to outstrip them, in this so rational a Confidence; to hear * *Antonine* the Emperour advising himself *to live like one that had committed all his Affairs to God, with all his Soul*; and *Plato* saying, † *If this is what God likes best, oh let it be*; and *Epictetus* considering the Divine Dispensations, ‖ as *the result of the perfectest Knowledge and good Providence*; and again, professing himself * *to have intirely conformed his Will to the Divine, to be sick whenever God would have him, to undertake whatever God requires of him, to desire what God likes best, to enjoy what God judges most convenient, and to die* when God would have him (which by the way, is one of those Methods that God uses for the deliverance of his Servants when worn out with Afflictions, for he *takes* some of *the Righteous away* from incumbent Evils, as well as others *from the Evils to come*) *looking upon his own Will and Desires*, whilst thus composed, *as no more capable of being cross'd, than God's is*, with which they always go along; and a little after, † *prescribing it as the most usefull course in order to a secure passage in this World, to commit one's self to God, by considering his* Divine *Will, and* most wise *administration of Affairs*: It is an in-

* Τὸ δὲ ὑπόλειπον τοῦ βίου διέξελθε, ὡς θεοῖς μὲν ἐπιτετροφὼς τὰ σαυτοῦ πάντα ἐξ ὅλης τῆς ψυχῆς. Εἰς ἑαυτ. l. 40. c. 20.

† Εἰ ταύτῃ θεοῖς φίλον, ταύτῃ ἔστω. Plat. Crit.

‖ Τιμᾶν οὖν αὐτὸς δεῖ, καὶ σέβεσθαι, καὶ πείθεσθαι τοῖς ὑπ' αὐτῶν γενομένοις, καὶ εἴκειν αὐτοῖς ἑκόντας· καὶ ἀρεσκώμεθα ὡς ὑπ' ἀρίστης γνώμης, καὶ ἀγαθῆς προνοίας γενομένοις. Simpl. in Epict. c. 38.

* Προσκατατέταχά μου τὴν ὁρμὴν τῷ Θεῷ· θέλει μ' ἐκεῖνος πυρέσσειν; κἀγὼ θέλω, θέλει ὁρμᾶν ὅπῃ τι· κἀγὼ θέλω. Θέλει με τυχεῖν τινός; κἀγὼ βούλομαι· οὐ θέλει; οὐ βούλομαι. Ἀποθανεῖν οὖν θέλω. Τίς ἔτι με κωλύσαι δύναται παρὰ τὸ ἐμοὶ φαινόμενον, ἢ ἀναγκάσαι; οὐ μᾶλλον ἢ τὸν Δία. Arr. Epict. l. 3. c. 26.

† Ἐὰν τῷ Θεῷ προσκατατάξῃ ἑαυτὸν, διελεύσεται ἀσφαλῶς· πῶς λέγεις προσκατατάξαι; ἵν' ὃ ἂν ἐκεῖνος θέλῃ, καὶ αὐτὸς θέλῃ· καὶ ὃ ἂν ἐκεῖνος μὴ θέλῃ τοῦτο μηδ' αὐτὸς θέλῃ· πῶς οὖν τοῦτο γένηται; πῶς γὰρ ἄλλως, ἢ ὀπισκεψαμένῳ τὰς ὁρμὰς τοῦ Θεοῦ, καὶ τὴν διοίκησιν. Ibid.

tolerable ſhame, I ſay, to obſerve this readineſs in Heathens to *caſt all their Care upon God*, and at the ſame time to think how ſcandalouſly moſt Chriſtians come behind them in it, how apt we are to whine, and be dejected, and out of heart, only becauſe God is not pleaſed to follow our own Imaginations in his dealings with us; and particularly, becauſe he condeſcends to viſit us ſometimes with his neceſſary and ſalutary Chaſtiſements, and will not be entreated to withdraw his Hand, before we are fit for the removal of it.

Bleſſed God! is this our Reſignation to thy moſt holy Will? is this all our Truſt in thee? alas, how far are we from duly *caſting our Care upon thee*, whilſt we thus ſenſeleſly ſuffer any croſs Accidents to eſtrange our Souls from thee? It is groſs folly to expect, or deſire all clear Weather, nothing but fair Sun-ſhine Days, without Foggs or Rain, or to repine at wholſome Winds to fan the Air and diſperſe its Vapours, or ſeaſonable Showers to refreſh the Earth, and make it fruitfull. And no leſs unreaſonable is it in relation to our ſelves, to reckon upon nothing but Eaſe and Plenty, and abundance of Satisfaction in the enjoyment hereof, without recollecting what need we have of Afflictions to purifie and exalt our Minds, and put us upon preparing for a better ſtate, or to think our ſelves neglected by God, whenever any remarkable portion of them falls to our ſhare. Whereas the conſideration hereof ſhould diſpoſe us on the contrary, to look up to God, as knowing that they all come from him, and to endeavour heartily to approve our ſelves to him, as firmly believing, that he will not fail to put an end to them, when

he

he ſees us rightly prepared for it, and that it will be for our good; and in the mean time, till he does it, comforting our ſelves in the aſſurance we have of ſuch his abundant Goodneſs to us. The fitteſt time for manifeſting our ſure Truſt in God is, when we labour under heavy Preſſures and Calamities, and have no hope of help from any elſe. And accordingly it is an indiſpenſable duty in this caſe, ſtill to perſevere in an unwearied Dependance upon him, chearfully and comfortably waiting his Time for a Deliverance.

And would perſons be prevailed with to make this their conſtant Practice; would they but conſider what I have written, not as a ſpeculative Doctrine, but as a neceſſary matter of Duty, in order to the amendment of their Lives; and inſtead of ſenſeleſly aggravating any Evils they lie under, or Dangers that threaten them, would they be perſwaded ſeriouſly to meditate upon the ſingular encouragement God has given them to look up to him for a ſeaſonable redreſs of all their Grievances; and would weigh well with themſelves how ready he is to help thoſe who make him their Refuge; not ſo much attending *to the Rod, as to him that hath appointed it*, and thinking how eaſily he can remove it, and what cauſe they have conſtantly to truſt in him; they would ſoon perceive a very remarkable abatement of their Sorrows. This would prove an admirable courſe for eaſing their Minds in all conditions, by taking off the edge and pungency of their Sufferings of whatſoever nature.

The Root of Man's Miſery, ſaith an ingenious Author, *is not in daring to truſt himſelf unto the Law of his own Nature, and the Providence of his Maker.* * Sir *Ph. Warwick*, of Government. p. 159.

Maker. And it is very certain, that this sort of misimanagement creates Men a great deal of trouble and perplexity, which might be avoided, if they were but more mindfull of God's Protection, and the reason they have to rest quietly upon it, without fretting and tormenting themselves to no purpose. And till they have conquered themselves in this respect, I cannot much wonder, if they be ready to sink under the weight of every Calamity that befalls them.

AN EXHORTATION TO PATIENT SUFFERING FOR Righteousness, IN A SERMON ON 1 St. PET. III. 14, 15.

What shall it profit a Man, if he shall gain the whole World and lose his own Soul? S. Mar. 8. 36.

Sic itaq; nos ad Deum expansos ungulæ fodiant, cruces suspendant, ignes lambant, gladii guttura detruncent, bestiæ insiliant, paratus est ad omne supplicium ipse habitus orantis Christiani. *Tertull. Apol. c.* 30.

Ὅυτ' οὖν ἡ τῆς εὐδαιμονίας ἐλπὶς, οὐθ' ἡ πρὸς τὸν Θεὸν ἀγάπη, δυσαναχετεῖ πρὸς τὰ ὑποπίπτοντα· μένει δὲ ἐλευθέρα, κἂν θηρίοις τοῖς ἀγριωτάτοις, κἂν τῷ παμφάγῳ ὑποπέσῃ πυρὶ, κἂν κατακτείνηται βασάνοις τυραννικαῖς, τὸν θείαις ἀπαρτωμένη φιλίαις, ἀδούλωτος ἄνω περιπολεῖ, τὸ σῶμα παραδοῦσα τοῖς τούτου μόνου ἔχεσθαι δυναμένοις. Clem. Alexand. Stro. l. 4.

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AN

EXHORTATION

TO

PATIENT SUFFERING

FOR

Righteousness Sake,

IN A

SERMON

ON

1 ST PETER III. 14.

An Exhortation to Patient Suffering for Righteouſneſs.

1 S. Pet. III. 14, 15.

But and if ye ſuffer for Righteouſneſs ſake, happy are ye, and be not afraid of their terrour, neither be troubled: But ſanctifie the Lord God in your hearts, and be ready always to give an anſwer to every one that asketh of you, a reaſon of the hope that is in you, with meekneſs and fear.

OUR Bleſſed Saviour in his Divine Sermon on the Mount, to encourage his Diſciples to proceed the more comfortably and vigorouſly in the profeſſion of his Name, declares *a Bleſſedneſs* to belong to thoſe * *that are perſecuted for Righteouſneſs ſake*, and that they are hereby entituled to a place in *the Kingdom of Heaven*, exhorting them to *rejoyce and be exceeding glad* at the forethought of ſo incomparable a Reward reſerved in ſtore for them till a future ſtate. At other times he cautions them to expect their ſhare of Reproaches, Afflictions, and all kinds of Indignities, informing them that they ſhould certainly † *be delivered up to the Councils, and beaten in*

* S. Matt. 5. 10, 11, 12.

† S. Mar. 13. 9.

the Synagogues, and should be brought before Kings and Rulers upon this account, that they should be
* S. Mat 10. 22. * *hated of all men for his Name's sake*; that † *in*
† S. Jo. 16. 33. *the World* they should *have tribulation*; that they
‖ Ibid. v. 2. should be ‖ *put out of the Synagogues*; *yea* moreever, that *the time would come*, when Men would *think to do God* good *Service* in putting them to death; but comforting them likewise in the mean while, with an assurance that seeing he
* v. 33. had already * *overcome the World* for them, they needed not therefore to be affrighted at all its Threats and Cruelties. And again, he acquaints
† S. Matt. 10. 28. them † what abundant reason they had to fear God more than Man, and his Eternal Vengeance infinitely beyond the utmost Evils that could possibly befall them in this World; and bids
‖ S. Lu. 12. 32. them ‖ *not fear, because it was their Father's good will to give them the Kingdom*, implying, that having destined them to that singular happiness he would not fail to take care of them in the mean time.

And the same Doctrine our Apostle S. *Peter* here inculcates on the Strangers dispersed through-
* c. 1. 1. out * *Pontus*, *Galatia*, *Cappadocia*, *Asia*, and *Bithynia*; whom he advises to account it as a Blessing, and a Favour, rather than a Grievance and a Vexation, when they should be called to suffer for a good Conscience, and therefore not to be disturbed or afraid whatsoever dangers they might be threatned with, from the Power and Malice of their enraged Adversaries, but to *sanctifie the Lord God in their hearts*, by an humble, earnest, and steady dependance upon his good Providence to take care of them, and an undaunted perseverance in their Duty, how hard or dangerous soever, being ready upon all occasions,

and

and in the worſt of times, to confeſs him before Men, and ſubmiſſively and patiently to bear all the Severities, whereto they might poſſibly find themſelves expoſed for their adherence either to his Doctrines or Precepts, to the Principles of the Chriſtian Faith, or to the faithfull and conſcientious obſervance of thoſe moſt holy Commands he had given them in charge. *But and if ye ſuffer for righteouſneſs ſake, happy are ye, and be not afraid of their terrour, neither be troubled, but ſanctifie the Lord God in your hearts, and be ready always to give an anſwer to every man that asketh you a reaſon of the hope that is in you, with meekneſs and fear.*

Which being a Doctrine that concerned not the firſt Chriſtians only, but all that at any time fall under Perſecutions for the ſake of their Religion and their Saviour, as ſome have in all Ages, and many in our own times, in ſeveral parts of the World, and many more poſſibly may; that therefore which I deſign at preſent from theſe words, is, to apply the Doctrine ſeriouſly to our ſelves, to try if we can be prevailed with to prepare our ſelves for the conſtant practice of it, as oft as we may have occaſion. And to this end I ſhall beg leave to enforce it from theſe ſeveral following Conſiderations.

1. To be willing to ſuffer when called to it, is no more than our Religion enjoins us from time to time, as a neceſſary qualification for being our Lord's Diſciples, and abſolutely requiſite in order to Salvation.

2. It is but what our bleſſed Lord has done for us in a very extraordinary manner.

3. This

3. This is the best and most effectual way of defending our Religion.

4. It is a service that will undoubtedly meet with an abundant Recompence. And lastly,

5. It is no such dreadfull Task as Men are wont ordinarily to imagine. Of these in their order, and I begin with the first of them.

1. To be willing to suffer whenever called to it is no more than our Religion enjoins us from time to time, as a necessary qualification for being our Lord's Disciples, and absolutely requisite in order to Salvation. It is not the portion of all actually to suffer for our Saviour's sake; but there is no possibility of approving our selves good Christians at present, or being happy hereafter, without a Readiness and Preparation of Mind to do it, as oft as occasion offers it self; that is to say, whensoever it cannot be avoided without Sin. There is no temporal Advantage so valuable, nor any Loss or Cruelty so formidable, but that we must be content to conquer our selves in relation to it, even to part with * *a right eye*, or *hand*, or what perhaps may be as dear to us, before we can promise our selves, that our Lord will own us for his Followers here, or admit us into his Heavenly Kingdom when we shall be translated hence.

* S. Matt. 5. 29, 30.

† S. Lu. 9. 23. † *If any man will come after our Saviour, he must deny himself, and take up his Cross daily and follow him.* If any would be ‖ *confessed* and owned by him *before his Father which is in Heaven*, he must not be ashamed nor afraid to own Him, and his Doctrines, and Commands, though in the most perilous times. If any would be accounted * *worthy of him*, he must be disposed to leave

‖ S. Matt. 10. 32, 33.

* v. 37, 38, 39. & S. Lu. 14. 26.

leave all his neareſt and deareſt Relations, *yea, and his own life alſo*, upon his account; which whoſoever refuſes to do, *he cannot be his Diſciple.* It often happens, that they * *who would live holily in Chriſt Jeſus, muſt* unavoidably *ſuffer Perſecutions*, and muſt † *enter through many Tribulations into the Kingdom of Heaven.* And hence we are directed to eſteem our ſelves happy, if we be reproached and abuſed for the Name of Chriſt, and to ‖ *count it all joy when we fall into temptations*, and whilſt we * *ſuffer according to the will of God*, for our firm adherence to his Laws, to bear it patiently and quietly, never attempting to caſt the Croſs off from our Shoulders by any unwarrantable means, but *committing the keeping of our Souls to him in well-doing, as unto a faithfull Creator*, and † *not to think it ſtrange* even *concerning the fiery trial*, if that ſhould prove our lot, as though ſome wonderfull matter had befallen us, and with which other Chriſtians had been unacquainted, but to look upon it rather as a juſt ground of Joy and Comfort when we are thus made like to Chriſt in Suffering; in hope that at the laſt day ‖ *when his* tranſcendent *Glory ſhall be revealed*, we alſo ſhall have abundant cauſe to *be glad with exceeding joy.*

* 2 Tim. 3.12.
† Act. 14. 22.
‖ S. Ja. 1. 2.
* 1 S. Pet. 4. 19.
† v. 12, 13.
‖ S. Lu. 12. 4.

We muſt not ſtand in * fear of *them that can kill the body, and after that have nothing more that they can do*, but of God Almighty, who is infinitely greater than the moſt powerfull of Men, and able to puniſh infinitely beyond all the Barbarities of the moſt outrageous Adverſary, by *deſtroying both body and ſoul in Hell*; muſt be ſure in all things to † *obey God rather than man*, whatſoever the conſequence be in this World; and muſt conſtantly perſiſt in well-doing, and whatever

* S. Matt. 10. 28.
† Act. 5. 29.

ever we ſuffer for our Integrity, muſt yet be
* 1 S Pet. 2. 20. mindfull to * *take it patiently*, with an hearty zeal for God's Glory, and an entire Reſignation to his holy Will, as well knowing that *this is an acceptable* Service *with God*, and highly pleaſing in his ſight.

This is the plain Doctrine of the Goſpel. And it is therefore a great vanity to talk of treading in our Saviour's ſteps, or entituling our ſelves to the ineſtimable benefits of his Death and Reſurrection, if we permit our ſelves to live in contradiction to it, or to conceit, that we ſhall be accepted as his Followers, if we think much
† S. Matt. 20. 23. to † *drink of the cup that he drank of, or to be baptized with the Baptiſm* of Sufferings *that he was baptized with.* He has ſufficiently declared, that he will admit of none but upon condition of
‖ Rom. 8. 29. being ‖ *conformed to his image*, by enduring all thoſe evils whereto they ſhall at any time find themſelves expoſed for the ſake of a good Con-
* S. Mar. 8. 38. ſcience; aſſuring us moreover, that * *whoſoever ſhall be aſhamed of* (or unwilling to own) *Him and his Words*, (both his Doctrines and his Precepts) *in the midſt of an adulterous and ſinfull generation, of him alſo ſhall the ſon of man be aſhamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy Angels.*

This is the firſt Conſideration; and is ſufficient, one would think, to engage all who have any Reverence for their crucified Redeemer, or any love for their own Souls, readily to ſubject themſelves to all kinds of Loſſes, Reproaches, or other the ſevereſt Afflictions, rather than both diſhonour their holy Profeſſion, and ruine themſelves to all Eternity. However, that we may all be the rather invited to a cheatfull ſuffering

for

for the ſake of our Saviour, and the neceſſary Points and Principles of his Religion, I propounded in the next place, and now accordingly proceed to remind you, that

2. This is but what our Lord has done for us in a very ſignal manner. Who, * *though he were rich, yet became poor for our ſakes, that we through his poverty might be made rich.* Though he were † *in the form of God*, and *thought it not robbery to be equal with God*, yet *made* he *himſelf of no reputation*, but *took upon him the form of a ſervant, and was made in the likeneſs of men: and being found in faſhion as a man, he humbled himſelf, and became obedient to death, even* that vile, ſervile, ignominious, and cruel death, *the death of the Croſs.* He who had from all Eternity been infinitely happy together with the Father, out of his immenſe compaſſion to fallen Man, condeſcended in time to be born into the World, of a poor Virgin, to lead a mean and deſpicable, a troubleſome and uneaſie life, expoſed to all the Infirmities of Humane Nature, Sin only excepted, and to die in the moſt contemptible and painfull manner, that hereby he might redeem us from Sin, Death, and Hell, and might reſtore us to his Father's Favour, and procure us a Title to the ineffable Glories of his everlaſting Kingdom.

* 2 Cor. 8. 9.

† Phil. 2. 6, 7, 8.

What intolerable Diſingenuity therefore, what monſtrous Ingratitude muſt it be, for any of thoſe whom he has thus exceſſively commiſerated to ſtick at any the ſevereſt Sufferings, much more to be unwilling to part with only ſome preſent poſſeſſions, or other outward conveniencies in obedience to his Command? Whenever thou calleſt to mind what Pain and Shame, what Reproach

proach and Contempt, what Wants, what Affronts, what Tortures, what Agonies he underwent upon thy account, how * *he was despised and rejected of men*, and became *a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief*; that † *through his stripes thou mightest be healed*, how ‖ *he was wounded for thy transgressions, and bruised for thy iniquities, was taken from prison, and from judgment, and was cut off out of the land of the living*; and all this to make Atonement for thy Sins, and redeem thee from the unconceivable Miseries justly due to them; when thou reflectest, I say, upon this singular Love of thy incarnate and dying Saviour, how canst thou find in thy Heart to refuse dying again for him? But especially how canst thou possibly preferr some fading transitory Priviledge or Enjoyment before thy Duty to him? Had not he given himself for thee thou hadst been irrecoverably ruined for evermore; and how canst thou then be backward to make him the best return for it thou art able? How canst thou be afraid of suffering, when thou hast him for thy Guide, and seriously layest to heart, that * *he also suffered for thee, leaving thee an Example, that thou shouldest tread in his steps?* The Meditation hereof, if duely attended to, would make thee almost ambitious, † with the Primitive Christians, of the Crown of Martyrdom. At least it would certainly engage thee

* Is. 53. 3.

† v. 5.

‖ v. 8.

* 1 S. Pet. 2. 21.

† Dum mori post mortem timent, interim mori non timent. *Cæcil in Min. Fel.* Si nondum nostrum sanguinem fudimus, sed fudisse parati sumus, nemo hoc dilationis nostræ moram Clementiam judicet, quæ nobis officit, quæ impedimentum gloriæ facit, quæ cœlum differt, quæ gloriosam Dei conspectum inhibet. *D Cyprian Epist.* 31. *Edit. Ox.* Pœna illic subigitur, cruciatus obteritur, nec mors metuitur sed optatur. *Epist.* 37. Cum omni sævitiâ vestrâ concertamus, etiam ultro irrumpentes: magisque damnati, quàm absoluti, gaudemus. *Tertull. ad Scap.*

to

to a resolute and undaunted observance of all thy Saviour's Laws, and thy indissoluble obligations to him; and so would dispose thee * to *endure hardships as a good Souldier of Jesus Christ*, to esteem the † *reproach of*, or for, *Christ, greater riches than* all earthly *treasures*, and to *choose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.* Especially if it be again considered, That,

* 2 Tim. 2. 3.

† Heb. 11. 25, 26.

3. This is the best and most effectual way of defending our Religion, ‖ which whilst People take any other course to preserve they know not what mischief they may do it by those attempts, and whether instead of protecting and maintaining it, they are not giving it its mortal wound. * *Joannes Commenius*, the last Archbishop of *Prague*, bewails the miserable condition whereinto the Churches of *Bohemia* and *Moravia* were brought by attempting to save themselves by Arms, which could not secure them, as they expected, but became an inlet to their ruine, to that degree, that he complains a little after, † they had neither Church allowed them, nor School, nor private exercise of their Religion, and had their Bibles, and other usefull Instruments of Devotion taken from them.

‖ Salus autem civitatis Dei talis est, ut eum fide ac per fidem teneri, vel potius acquiri possit, fide autem perdita ad eam quisque venire non possit. *D. Aug. de Civit. Dei, l. 22. c. 6.*

* Histor. Eccles. Sclavon. p. 58.

† Ut intra Bohemiam & Moraviam, nullum amplius Evangelicis restet Templum, nulla Schola, nullum privatum religionis exercitium, nulli sacri libri, exustis Bibliorum codicibus aliisq; purioris divini cultus adminiculis, p. 59.

Whereas on the contrary, there is nothing more recommends Religion to Mankind, than to behold its Professors ready with unshaken Courage and Resolution to expose themselves and all that is dear to them in this World upon its account.

This

This * convinces Men that such persons are really persuaded of the truth of those Doctrines, and the reasonableness of those Precepts, which they have embraced, and for which they are fully set upon suffering in the World, and hereby inclines them to hearken the rather to those Arguments, which are offered for inviting themselves also to the same choice.

It was a famed Observation amongst the ancient Christians, † that the Blood of the Martyrs, which was barbarously shed in so many several parts of the World, was but the Seed of the Church. And ‖ indeed it was good Seed, and brought forth a plentifull Crop of new Professors, to the honour of God, and his Religion, and the terrour and astonishment of their Persecutors. Their * Religion was not overthrown by all the Tortures they underwent; but on the other hand, their brave and truly Christian manner of bearing them, improved them to a better purpose, making them an occasion of gaining numbers of other Proselytes to that

* Nam cum videat vulgus dilacerari homines variis tormentorum generibus, & inter fatigatos carnifices invictam tenere patientiam; existimant, id quod res est, nec consensum tam multorum, nec perseverantiam morientium vanum esse nec ipsam patientiam sine Deo cruciatus tantos posse superare. *Lactant. Instit. l. 5. c. 13.*

† Nec quicquam tamen proficit exquisitior quæq; crudelitas vestra, illecebra est magis sectæ. Plures efficimur quoties metimur à vobis, semen est sanguis Christianorum, &c. *Tertul. Apol. c. ult.* Χριστιανοὶ κολαζόμενοι καθ' ἡμέραν πλεονάζουσι μᾶλλον. Just. M. Ep. ad Diog. Οὐχ ὁρᾷς, ὅσῳ πλείονες, κολάζοντες, τοσούτῳ πλεονάζοντας ἄλλους. Ibid. Cum autem noster numerus semper Deorum cultoribus augeatur; nunquam vero, ne in ipsa quidem persecutione minuatur. *Lactant. Instit l. 5. c. 13*

‖ Ad multiplicandam Ecclesiam valuit sanctus sanguis effusus seminatione. *D. August. in Psalm. 40.* Multiplicati sunt magis magisque Christiani, &c. *Ibid.* De sanguine occisorum tanti exsurrexerunt à quibus illi interfectores martyrum superarentur. *Ibid. in Psal. 134.*

* Διωγμοῖς— οἱ τιμιώτερον τὸ χριστιανισμὸν πεποιήκασι θάττον ἢ ἐσθενέστερον. Greg. Naz. στηλ. 1.

Faith,

Faith they ſaw thus outraged, but which withall ſo wonderfully influenced its Profeſſors, enabling them to deſpiſe all the Malice of Men or Devils, and all their extravagant endeavours for its extirpation.

Beſides, to ſuffer for Religion, rather than ſeek to preſerve it by any ſinfull either Compliance or Reſiſtance, is * the ſureſt courſe that can poſſibly be taken to obtain the compleateſt ſafeguard both for it and our ſelves, I mean the Divine Protection. This argues an hearty reſignation to the Divine Will, and a ſteady Faith and Truſt in God, and obedience to his Laws, though when they ſeem moſt directly contradictory to our preſent intereſt; and may therefore juſtly be concluded of very great uſe for procuring his Favour and Defence. Which whilſt we can aſſuredly depend upon, we may ſafely averre with the Prophet *Eliſha*, upon the news of the Forces which the King of *Syria* had ſent to ſeize him, † *They that be with us are more they that be with our Adverſaries*; or with the holy Evangeliſt, That ‖ *greater is he that is in us than he that is in the world.* He is greater and infinitely more powerfull than all that can poſſibly ſet themſelves againſt us, and can therefore eaſily defeat all their moſt malicious Deſigns, and place us in ſecurity; whilſt they that truſt more to their own Attempts than to his good Providence are frequently entrapp'd in the works of their own hands, and ſo are taught by ſad Experience, what egregious folly it is, to forſake their God to ſave themſelves. But this is not all; for,

* Defendenda enim religio eſt, non occidendo, ſed moriendo, non ſævitiâ, ſed patientiâ, non ſcelere, ſed fide. *Lactant. Inſt. l. 5. c. 19*

† 2 King. 6. 16.

‖ 1 Jo. 4. 4.

4. To chooſe Suffering rather than Sin, is not only a neceſſary Duty, required in Scripture, and enforced by our Saviour's Example, and his Commiſeration and Goodneſs to fallen Man, and a means of maintaining, adorning, and propagating the Religion for which we thus ſuffer, but it is moreover what ſhall be abundantly rewarded in a future State. When our Lord ſhall appear at the laſt day to *render to every man according to his doings*, he will have a ſingular regard for thoſe that have forſaken Father, or Mother, or Brethren, or Siſters, or Houſes, or Lands, to follow him, but eſpecially that ſhall have reſolved to part with their Lives ſooner than with their Integrity. He will remember all their Loſſes, Reproaches, Tortures, or whatever they had willingly endured for him, and will convince them to their endleſs Comfort, That their * *light afflictions which were but for a moment*, had ſerv'd to *work out for them a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.* And if there be different degrees of Happineſs for the Saints in Heaven, (as it needs not in the leaſt to be doubted but there are) then may it more than be preſumed, that the chief Seats there, the more honourable Thrones will be allotted to them who have waded through the ſoreſt Tryals here, and by ſuffering moſt have moſt effectually triumphed over the Malice of their Adverſaries. And thus much perhaps may be imply'd in thoſe words of our Bleſſed Saviour;

† *Bleſſed are ye when men ſhall hate you, and when they ſhall ſeparate you from their company, and ſhall reproach*

† S. Lu. 6. 23.

* Quid enim, ſi (ut Furius dicebat) rapiatur, vexetur, exterminetur, egeat, auferantur ei oculi, damnetur, uratur, miſeris etiam modis necetur; perdetne ſuum præmium virtus? An potius peribit ipſa? Minime! ſed & mercedem ſuam Deo judice accipiet, & vivet, & ſemper vigebit. *Lactant. Inſtit. l. 5. c. 18.*

reproach you, and cast out your name as evil for the Son of man's sake: Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold your reward is great in heaven.

* *Blessed*, also *is the man*, saith S. *James, that endureth temptations, for when he is tried, he shall receive the Crown of Life, which the Lord had promised to them that love him.* And S. *Paul* not only delivers it as an undoubted truth, That † *if we suffer with Christ*, or for his Honour and Glory, *we shall also reign with him*; but declares likewise the wonderfull disparity that is betwixt our present transient Tribulations, and the inestimable Felicity whereto they lead! such as that these seem of little account, whensoever we seriously fix our thoughts upon it. ‖ *For I reckon*, says the Apostle, *that the sufferings of this present time, are not worthy to be compared with*, or bear no manner of proportion to, *the glories that shall be revealed in us.* Which, whosoever duly considers with himself, one would think he should need no other Argument for encouraging him to despise all the Flatteries and the Terrours of this World, and even Life it self, in comparison of so unconceivably valuable a Recompence of Reward. And yet I have one thing more to add; which is, That

* S. Ja. 1. 12.

† 2 Tim. 2. 12.

‖ Rom. 8. 18.

5. To suffer for our Saviour's sake, or in his Cause, is no such dreadfull Task, as Men are wont ordinarily to imagine. As I shall endeavour to prove by these following steps.

1. Perhaps our Sufferings may not be great. We may only be stripped of some * Superfluities of Estate, or some Title or Post of Honour,

* O infœlicem ægrum! quare? quia non vino nivem diluit, quia non rigorem potionis suæ, quam capaci scypho miscuit, renovat fractâ insuper glacie: quia non ostrea illi Lucri-

na in ipſa menſa aperiuntur; quia non circa cœnationem ejus tumultus coquorum eſt, &c. *Senec. Epiſt.* 78.

neither of which are neceſſary to our Welfare; and which it would not much grieve us to be deprived of, if we were but rightly apprehenſive how well we may live without them, if we pleaſe. Or if we be touched more nearly in our perſons, this it may be reaches only to an inconvenient and chargeable Confinement, or ſome other like tolerable puniſhment; which though uneaſie in it ſelf, may however very well be born, conſidering the occaſion of it, and the vaſt advantage that may reaſonably be expected to redound from it. Or if our Lot be harder, and we have a heavier portion of Miſeries to conflict with, we have ſtill this comfort left, That

2. They cannot laſt very long. None of our Afflictions can poſſibly affect us beyond this preſent life, * which at beſt we know is of no certain continuance, but liable to a thouſand Accidents which may ſoon diſpatch it; or if they do not, is however conſtantly haſtening towards a Concluſion, like † *a Vapour that appears for a little time, and then vaniſhes away.* There is none of us all knows how quickly he may be ſummoned hence, and whether he ſhall not immediately be called for, and when he leaſt expects it; like the rich Man in S. *Luke*'s Goſpel, who had been heaping up Wealth, and was now promiſing himſelf a comfortable enjoyment of it, had filled his Barns well, and was bleſſing himſelf to think what ſatisfaction he ſhould have in ‖ Lu. 12. 20. the emptying them again, but ‖ ſuddenly came a ſurprizing meſſage to acquaint him, that he might

* Compendio rem dicamus: Vita eſt, Somnus, bulla, vitrum, glacies, flos, fabula, fœnum, Umbra, cinis, punctum, vox, ſonus, aura, nihil. *Drexel. prodr. ætern. c.* 1. 30.

† *S. Ja.* 4. 14.

might no longer be permitted the enjoyment of what he had thus amaſſed together, not one day more might be allowed him to taſte the fruit of all his Labour, ſo uncertain and precarious is this Life's Tenure.

And at its utmoſt extent it is but of little duration, and in no wiſe fit to be ſet in competition with a future eternal ſtate. Thus true is that ſaying of the Son of *Syrach*, * *What is man? and whereto ſerveth he? what is his good? and what is his evil? The number of a man's days at the moſt are an hundred years. As a drop of water unto the ſea, and a gravelſtone in compariſon of the ſand, ſo are a thouſand years to the days of eternity.* And thoſe Afflictions therefore which concern us only during our ſtay in this ſhort, tranſient, uncertain life, are by no means to be reckoned upon as very long. But beſides,

* Eccluſ. 18. 8, 9, 10.

3. It is poſſible they may be very ſhort. † When they are in extremity, they are a very likely means of ſhortening a Life, which according to the courſe of nature could not be long without them, and ſo of putting a period both to it and themſelves together. And when they have not this effect, it may pleaſe God to remove them ſome other way, that ſo we may have no cauſe to complain of having been made to groan under them for any time. He may vouchſafe to ‖ *ſhorten the days* of any Perſecution, *for the elects ſake, whom he hath choſen*, and out of pity to thoſe that do, or are like to labour under it, that they may not be oppreſſed with overmuch ſorrow; or if the time of Tryal be prolonged may yet condeſcend to deliver us from it,

† Quodcunq; illud eſt malum, tecum ipſe metire, ac timorem tuum taxa: Intelliges profectò, aut non magnum, aut non longum eſſe quod metuis. *Senec. Epiſt.* 24. Nemo poteſt valdè dolere, & diu. *Epiſt.* 78.

‖ S. Mark 13. 20.

* Am. 4. 11.

† Act. 23. 20, 21.

‖ Esth. 8. 8.

* Isai. 37. 29. & 1 Sam. 23. 28, 29.

† Joseph. περὶ ἁλώσ. Ἰουδ. l. 2. c. 17. & Socrat. Hist. Eccl. l. 3. c. 19, 20, 21.

‖ Exod. 14. 27.

* *plucking us as a firebrand out of the burning.* He may † unexpectedly detect the wicked Contrivances of his Enemies, ‖ or abate their Malice, * or defeat their Designs, † or cut them off in the midst of their career, and ‖ bring the mischief they had intended for us upon their own Heads, and by any of these Means, or what other he pleases, may deliver us out of our Troubles. And yet if he do not, we may farther remember for our encouragement, That whilst they last,

4. They frequently administer a great deal of Comfort and Consolation to the Sufferers.

* 2 Cor. 1. 3, 4, 5.

* *Blessed be God,* says S. *Paul, even the father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the father of mercies, and the God of comfort, who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we our selves are comforted of God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounded by Christ.* And again he professes himself to have

† c. 12. 10.

† *taken pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake.* And of the rest of the Apostles we read,

‖ Act. 5. 41.

that *they* ‖ *departed from before the Council,* who had sentenced them to be scourg'd, *rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for the name of Christ.* And doubtless all that tread in the same steps with these blessed Propagators of our Faith, being *followers of them as they were of Christ,* and offering as they did to suffer, and perhaps to die in his Cause, shall meet also with their proportion of the like Consolation. Such have *a continual feast* within.

Their

Their Sufferings may grate hard upon them, but they are ſenſible all the time, that theſe are not of their own procuring, for they befall them only by reaſon of their ſteady perſeverance in the ways of Righteouſneſs; their chief care is to approve themſelves to God above, and this is the true cauſe of the Enmity and Indignities they meet with from Men. And this reflection furniſhes them with a calm quiet, and ſerenity, peace, delight, and ſatisfaction of Mind, which they would not exchange for great Riches. It is natural for them likewiſe to look beyond their Troubles, and bethink themſelves of that tranſcendently happy ſtate, which they expect to ſucceed in lieu of them. And how muſt this neceſſarily tranſport them? How muſt it chear their Spirits, and elevate their Souls, to think how inconceiveable the Glories are, which they are thus vigorouſly endeavouring to ſecure to themſelves? Here is matter of joy and rapture, ſuch as no wicked Man can purchaſe for the greateſt price. And this cannot but be a mighty * ſupport to the Chriſtian Sufferer, and which will ſtrangely abate the ſharpneſs of all his Conflicts, and will enable him to continue on his courſe, and when beſet with the greateſt difficulties, nevertheleſs to encourage himſelf in his God, and willingly to encounter the utmoſt Dangers rather than fall ſhort of the Prize that is ſet before him. And yet once more,

* Beatus eſt igitur ſapiens in tormentis: ſed cum torquetur pro fide, pro juſtitiâ, pro Deo, illa patientia doloris beatiſſimum facit. Eſt enim Deus qui ſolus poteſt honorare virtutem, cujus merces immortalitas ſola eſt. *Lactant. Firm. Inſtit. div. l.* 3. *c.* 27.

5. The Chriſtian Sufferer is not without the peculiar aſſiſtance of the Holy Ghoſt, for ſetting him above the Power of all Oppoſition. As it

did the primitive Christians and Martyrs, who being supported and animated by the influence of this Blessed Spirit, could readily defie all kinds of Terrours, resolving that no Tryal or Temptation whatsoever should ever * *separate them from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.* To them † *was given in behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake.* And they did it in so remarkable, so eminent a manner, as may teach us all to conclude, that they must necessarily have been inspired with a supernatural Courage, since nothing less than this could have made them such illustrious Conquerours over all the formidable Difficulties they were to grapple with; and consequently, that there is just reason to expect the same Assistance in other Ages of the Church, as far as there shall be a like occasion for it. Hence it was that ‖ *Minucius Fœlix*, * S. *Cyprian*, † *Lactantius*, and others boast so much of the Sufferings of their Fellow-Christians, how not Men only, but Women and Children could undervalue Crosses, and Tortures, and wild Beasts, and all kinds of Punishments, and could patiently overcome the Malice and Cruelty of their Adversaries. And S. *Chrysostom* professes, ‖ That *their Conflicts were greater than could proceed from a mortal Nature, and that they slighted this present life, and trampled upon Racks and Torments, contemned Death, and were upon the wing towards Heaven, got free of the Tempestuous Sea of terrestrial Affairs, and sailed into the Haven of Quiet and Security.* And with what surprizing Joy both they and others since have triumphed over the heaviest Sufferings, is too large a Field for me to enter upon at present. But the serious meditation

* Rom. 8. 38, 39.

† Phil. 1. 29.

‖ P. 121

* Epist. 6. Edit. Ox. & Epist. 76.

† L. 5. c. 13.

‖ Ὧν γὰρ παλαίσματα ὑπὲρ θνητὴν φύσιν ἦν, &c. Cont. Judæos l. 3.

meditation of it ought certainly to convince us all, that it is no ſuch mighty buſineſs to ſuffer in a juſt and righteous Cauſe, and that we may reaſonably believe, that whatever Evils befall us upon this account will be found upon tryal to be far more tolerable and eaſie, than they had appeared to be whilſt at a diſtance, and we feared, but had not felt them.

The ſumm of all is, That to be ready to ſuffer upon a good account, is a neceſſary Chriſtian diſpoſition of Mind, and the leaſt return we can make to our Bleſſed Redeemer, who has done and ſuffered ſo much for us; and is moreover the propereſt courſe we can take to ſecure and propagate our Religion, and the only ſure way to be for ever happy; and yet that it will moſt probably be found a far eaſier task than moſt Men think it, nay, may poſſibly prove a juſt occaſion of Joy and Exultation in this preſent World, beſides the incomparable Glories wherewith it will be attended in the other.

It therefore now remains, that we be entreated to behave our ſelves accordingly, that we be not affrighted from our profeſſion by whatſoever Terrors, but adhere firmly to our Religion and all the Principles and Branches of it, as well in times of Danger, as when we may do it more ſecurely; * that we reſolve by God's Grace and Aſſiſtance to expoſe our ſelves to the utmoſt, and to endure the ſevereſt Tryals, rather than temporize, or act inſincerely in any reſpect; remembring always, that *the* † *Diſciple is not above his Maſter, nor the Servant above his Lord*, and that conſidering what

* Vir bonus— ſtatuit omnem cruciatum perferre, intolerabili dolore lacerari, potius quàm aut officium prodat aut fidem. *Cicer. Quæſt. Acad. l.* 2. *c.* 8.

† *S.* Matt. 10. 24.

rough

rough treatment our Saviour met with from the World, his Followers ought not to be ſurprized, if they meet alſo with the like. True Chriſtianity, like the bleſſed Author of it, has been, is, and will be attended with frequent oppoſition, and the earneſt endeavours of the Kingdom of Darkneſs for its Extirpation. And where there is no hope of wholly ruining it, the Tempter's next Contrivance is to deprave and corrupt it with ſuch Innovations, and falſe Gloſſes, and erroneous Interpretations as may endanger the Salvation of thoſe that admit of them; and then to try if any Perſwaſions, or Intreaties, or Promiſes, or where theſe fail, if any Terrours or Sufferings can prevail with perſons to embrace them. And they are not worthy the Name of Chriſtians, that cannot reſolve to perſiſt in defiance to all theſe Encounters, that cannot bear their Croſs after their Saviour, and be ready to lay down their Lives for him. 'Tis true, this is no very agreeable Doctrine to the corrupt Inclinations of Mankind, as not ſuiting well with Fleſh and Blood; and hence it comes to paſs, that Men had rather hear of, than practiſe it. But this makes it not at all the leſs neceſſarily incumbent on ſuch as took up their Religion upon the condition of ſuffering for it; which they cannot therefore decline, when required of them, without a notorious violation of all the Obligations they have laid upon themſelves to fight manfully under our Saviour's Banner. You can have no grounds to expect the Advantages, without being willing to bear alſo with the hardſhips of Religion.

* 1 S. Pet. 4. 15.

And yet, my Brethren, * *let none of you ſuffer as an evil-doer*, in any Caſe; becauſe ſo all your Sufferings

Sufferings will lie wholly at your own Doors. For it is not the weight of any one's * Sufferings, but the Righteouſneſs of his Cauſe that makes the Martyr. Men may have imbibed falſe, and perhaps very pernicious Principles, and Notions, and if theſe bring them into trouble, they may ſuffer only as Hereticks, or Schiſmaticks, or Traytors, not as faithfull Diſciples of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Or if their Principles be right and Orthodox, but they think to expreſs their Fidelity to them by a lewd and vicious, tumultuous, or other immoral Behaviour, and hereby bring themſelves into Difficulties, this is not yet to ſuffer as Chriſtians, not God but themſelves, not their Religion but their own Folly being the occaſion of what Inconveniencies befall them in this caſe. † *But to do well*, to keep within the bounds of Duty both to God and Man, and yet *to ſuffer patiently* for ſo doing, *this is acceptable with God.*

† 1 S. Pet. 2. 20.

Wherefore it very nearly concerns perſons in all places, and upon all appearances of trial, to ſee that they be rightly principled, and have due Notions and Apprehenſions of things, before they venture to ſuffer for them, leaſt otherwiſe they *offer the Sacrifice of Fools*, bearing only the due demerit of their own Guilt, or at leaſt, the natural effect of their Imprudence, inſtead of honouring God by a faithfull Confeſſion of him. But being once well aſſured in this point, and having duly informed themſelves of the Juſtice of their Cauſe, and the neceſſity they

* Cum martyrem non faciat pœna, ſed cauſa. *D. Auguſt. Epiſt.* 61. *& Epiſt.* 167. *& Cont. Creſcon. l.* 3. *c.* 47. Nam ſi pœna martyres faceret, omnia metalla martyribus plena eſſent; omnes catenæ martyres traherent, omnes qui gladio feriuntur, coronarentur. *Id. in Pſalm.* 34. Non ergo qui propter iniquitatem, & propter Chriſtianæ unitatis impiam diviſionem, ſed qui propter juſtitiam perſecutionem patiuntur, hi martyres veri ſunt. *Epiſt.* 50.

they are under of being true to it, they must proceed vigorously against all the Difficulties that can attend it, as not fit to be put in the Balance with that *far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory* which is promised to them that come off Victors in this Spiritual Warfare. It is infinitely beneath the hope of an heavenly-minded Christian, to stick at such Rubs as these, and not rather to make his way courageously through all the transitory Impediments wherewith he finds himself beset. * No Threats or Frowns of the greatest Tyrant, much less the insults of those of meaner Quality, should ever drive him out of his Road, or incline him to do any thing unbecoming his Character. † He should continually encourage himself, by revolving in his Mind how pleasing a sight it is in the Eyes of the Almighty to behold his faithfull Servants struggling with Griefs, bearing up against the severest Menaces and Punishments, and triumphing over the noise of Death, and the dread of the merciless Executioner, and keeping themselves free from the unjust Commands of Kings and Princes, that they may be at liberty to serve and obey their God only; should constantly remember that God is the Supream Lord of all, and ‖ his Laws are therefore above all to be attended to, and * that his Terrours are infinitely

* Justum & tenacem propositi virum,
Non ardor civium prava jubentium,
Non vultus instantis Tyranni
Mente quatit solida.
Hor Carm. l. 3. *Od.* 3.

Οὐδὲ παυσόμεθα ὁμολογοῦντες τοῦτον, κἂν τὰ ἓξ ἀνθρώπων ἡμῖν ἐπιφέρωνται ὀνείδη, καὶ ὁ δεινότατος ἀπειπεῖν ἀναγκάζῃ τύραννος. Just. Mart. c. Tryph.

† Quàm pulchrum spectaculum Deo cum Christianus cum dolore congreditur, cum adversum minas, & supplicia, & tormenta componitur? cum strepitum mortis, & horrorem carnificis irridens insultat? cum libertatem suam adversus reges & principes erigit? soli Deo cujus est, cedit? *Min. Fæl. Octav.*

‖ Act. 4. 19. & c. 5. 29.

* Da veniam; tu carcerem, ille gehennam minatur. *D. August. de verbis Domini Serm.* 6.

finitely beyond all that the moſt exquiſite Malice, backed by the greateſt Power, can poſſibly inflict here in this World.

And indeed they that labour not to bring themſelves to that paſs, that they can readily undergo the greateſt Indignities for their Saviour's ſake, ſhew but a mean reſpect to him, and that they undeſervedly bear his Name. For who is there would not willingly ſerve him, ſo long as it coſts him nothing? Who would not profeſs himſelf his follower, whilſt he finds it for his preſent advantage? But to continue faithfull to him when it cannot be done without apparent and very conſiderable damage, to perſevere in our Duty to him in times of ſore Temptations, conſcientiouſly and ſtrictly to obſerve his Commands when we are like to pay dear for it, this is the trueſt Criterion of our Love to him. * Our Fidelity is beſt tried in troubleſome times, and always appears moſt illuſtrious when expoſed to the greateſt Hardſhips, and forced to undergo the ſharpeſt Conflicts, and if it will not hold out in theſe Circumſtances there is too apparent cauſe to queſtion its Sincerity.

* In tribulationibus quis ſit fidelis agnoſcitur. *Sext. Pythag.*

And I cannot therefore but think it a great miſtake in any of us, at any time to terrifie our ſelves, and each other with a frightfull Scene of Perſecution, as though it were an intolerable burden; and not rather to fix our Meditations on the other hand, upon the admirable Comforts that uſually accompany it, and the unſpeakable Benefits, that will at length ariſe from it. Inſtead of thus dreſſing up the Miſeries of a Suffering Eſtate in all the moſt unagreeable Circumſtances, enough to tranſport us too often beyond the bounds of Patience, we ſhould do

far

far better ſervice to God and our holy Religion, and take a much more effectual courſe for ſecuring our own Eternal Welfare, if we would make it our care to form to our ſelves a compleater and leſs partial Character of thoſe Sufferings to which our Religion may at any time expoſe us, not harping only upon the Priſons, and the Fetters, and the Gibbets, and the Tortures, the Reproaches, the Baniſhments, the Wants, the Degradations, the Confiſcations, and the Flames of Martyrdom, which we are generally too too apt to be affrighted at, but labouring to make our ſelves truly ſenſible on the other ſide, of the admirable Conſolations that mightily abate its Terrours, which if duly attended to, would make People almoſt in love with it, * that it is a Service highly pleaſing to God, and for the Benefit and Honour of his Religion and its Profeſſors, and that it wants not the ſupport of his holy Spirit for carrying us through it in a triumphant manner, making us † *more than conquerours through him that loveth us*, nor the promiſe of an incomparable unconceivable Crown of Glory conſequent upon it in the other Life. This proſpect of Martyrdom would preſently poſſeſs Mens Minds with ſuch a notion of it, that they would not know how to uſe any indirect or unlawfull attempts for avoiding what they are thus aſſured may be tolerable in this World, but will unqueſtionably be of unſpeakable advantage in another. It would tempt us to take all opportunities for preparing our ſelves and each other for the Fiery-tryal, or whatever other leſs Inſtances of Suffering

* Bonum agonem ſubituræ eſtis, in quo Agonothetes Deus vivus eſt: Xyſtarches Spiritus Sanctus; corona æternitatis: brabium, angelicæ ſubſtantiæ politia in cœlis, gloria in ſæcula ſæculorum. *Tertull. ad Martyres, c.* 3.

† Rom. 8. 37.

ring for Chriſt, encouraging one another to follow the Example of the Apoſtles and other Diſciples and Confeſſours, who (as the great Apoſtle of the *Gentiles* ſpeaks of himſelf) * *thought not their Lives*, (not to ſay their Eſtates, Preferments, or Honours) *dear to them, ſo they might finiſh their courſe with joy*; but eſpecially of our Bleſſed Lord himſelf, † *the author and finiſher of our Faith, who for the joy that was ſet before him, endured the croſs, and deſpiſed the ſhame, and is ſet down at the right hand of the throne of God.* Thus it was with our Lord himſelf; and great numbers of his Followers drank deep of the ſame bitter Cup, without ever ſeeking how they might get out of the way, and ſo eſcape it. ‖ It would grieve you to the Heart to hear through what Seas of Blood they waded, during the hotter times of Perſecution, how they paſſed through good Report and bad Report, with what gainſayings and abuſes they conflicted, how they were forced from City to City, what Buffetings and Revilings, what Flames and Swords, what Racks and Gibbets, what Teeth of Beaſts, and other Methods of Cruelty they underwent for the Love of their Saviour, and through hope of the Prize that was ſet before them. * They were hated and unjuſtly perſecuted by Men of all Ranks, Degrees, and Profeſſions, whether *Jews* or *Gentiles*, whether bond or free, whether high or low, whether rich or poor, all Men had ſet themſelves againſt them, to cut them off from the face of the Earth.

* Act. 20. 24.

† Heb. 12. 2.

‖ Et nunc præſentia rerum eſt medius ardor, ipſa canicula perſecutionis ab iſto ſcilicet Cynocephalo. Alios ignis, alios gladius, alios beſtiæ Chriſtianos probaverunt: alii fuſtibus interim & ungulis inſuper deguſtata martyria in carcere eſuriunt. *Tertull. Scorpiac. c.* 1.

* Ἐκ πάντος γένους ἀνθρώπων ἀδίκως μισούμενοι, καὶ ἐπηρεαζόμενοι. Juſt. Mart. Apol. 2.

Earth. Insomuch that no where could they be at rest, but into whatever City or Town they enter'd, they were forthwith in danger of being seized, and brought to an untimely and undeserved Execution. And yet such was their Constancy and Resolution in the Profession of their Religion, such their fear of God, and such their care to demean themselves as in his sight, that they were almost unconcerned at whatever could befall them in this World. Though they were * *troubled on every side, yet were they not distressed*; though *perplexed, yet not in despair*; though *persecuted, and carrying in their body the marks of the Lord Jesus, yet they fainted not*, † *but whilst their outward man decayed, their inward man was renewed day by day.* They looked past this present World to that which is to come, and had their Minds, their Thoughts and Desires so fixed upon it, that they could stick at nothing that lay in the way to it.

* 2 Cor. 4. 8, &c.

† v. 16.

Wherefore seeing we are compassed about with such a multitude of Examples, *such a cloud of Witnesses* that have gone before us, and have left us plenty of Instances of their Victories over Persecutions and Temptations, what an indelible Shame and Reproach will it be to you and me, if we shall yet draw back, and like the Seed sown in the stony Ground, *in time of temptation fall away*, and by so doing dishonour God, and expose our selves to his eternal Indignation? This would be an egregious affront and provocation to Almighty God, whom we profess our selves so fearfull to offend, would be a shamefull blemish to, and perhaps might greatly endanger the subversion of that Religion which we would be thought so zealously concerned for, would argue

argue the higheſt Ingratitude towards our Bleſſed Saviour, who has been ſo infinitely gracious to us, would deprive us of that inеſtimable Crown which we make continual ſhew of ſeeking after, and would farther deliver us over to all thoſe eternal Tortures, Pangs, and Agonies which are threatened to the Timorous and Faint-hearted.

And oh that we would therefore be perſwaded to take a contrary courſe, to walk as Strangers and Pilgrims upon Earth, *That have here no continuing city, but ſeek one to come, looking not at the things which are ſeen and are temporal*, and fading, *but at the things which are not ſeen and are eternal*, and diſpoſing our ſelves to part with all things here below, rather than endanger the Salvation of our immortal Souls This is to be wiſe indeed, to be wiſe to the beſt and moſt ſerviceable Purpoſes of Wiſdom, and ought therefore to be the great care of all that hope either to pleaſe God or to be for ever happy with him.

And here I might have concluded, but that the Text ſuggeſts one farther Direction which I muſt not omit, in relation to the manner of our Suffering for Righteouſneſs, or in a juſt and righteous Cauſe, that it muſt be *with Meekneſs and Fear*, as well with Meekneſs towards Men, as with Fear towards God; that as the one is ſerviceable to prevent our drawing back and ſeeking baſely to ſhelter and ſave our ſelves, when called out to ſuffer, ſo the other may withhold us from all undue Exceſſes when we do ſuffer; that none of our Sufferings may tranſport us beyond the true temper of Chriſtianity, and

make us any way unjuſt and unreaſonable towards the Inſtruments and Abettors of them, either in our Cenſures or Actions, much leſs may put us upon ſtudying how we may poſſibly be able to revenge upon them all their unchriſtian behaviour towards us. I am not bound to receive all things with a Stoical Apathy, as if I had no ſenſe of any Cruelties that may be exerciſed upon me at any time; but yet I muſt conſider the Authors of them, as Rods in God's Hand for the juſt puniſhment of thoſe numerous Offences againſt him, which have deſerved a much ſeverer Treatment. I may not ſuffer my Paſſions or Reſentments to prevail above my Reaſon and my Duty; but muſt remember that by the Laws both of God and Man, Juſtice is owing to my moſt implacable Adverſaries, and I am no more to wrong them than other People, whether it be in reſpect to their Bodies, Goods, or Reputation. Their unwarrantable uſage of me is no licence for me to treat them again in the ſame unchriſtian manner, if it happen at any time to be in my power. For if I do, I no longer reſemble my Bleſſed Saviour, that unparallelled Pattern of an invincible Meekneſs, * *Who did no ſin, neither was guile found in his mouth, who when he was reviled, reviled not again, when he ſuffered he threatened not, but committed himſelf to him that judgeth righteouſly*; and who has accordingly commanded me, † *To love my Enemies, to bleſs them that curſe me, to do good to them that hate me, to pray for them that deſpitefully uſe me and perſecute me, that ſo I may be the child of my Father which is in heaven, who makes his Sun to riſe on the evil and on the good, and ſends his rain on the juſt and on the unjuſt.*

* 1 S. Pet. 2. 22, 23.

† S. Matt. 5. 44.

In

In a word, to acquit our ſelves good Chriſtians, we muſt be always prepared both to ſuffer whenever our Chriſtianity, or any part of it, requires it of us, and to do it after a Chriſtian ſort, with an intire Reſignation to the Divine Will, and Patience, and Meekneſs towards our greateſt Adverſaries; earneſtly beſeeching Almighty God, for our ſelves, that he will give us Grace to hold out to his Glory, and our own Salvation, and for *our Enemies, Perſecutors, and Slanderers*, that *it may pleaſe him to forgive* their Sins, *and to turn their Hearts*, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord, to whom with the Father, and the Holy Ghoſt, be all Honour and Glory now and for ever more. *Amen.*

FINIS.

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